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THE STAGE

JAMES E. MURDOCH.

Drama - Acting

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THE STAGE

PREFACE.

"Custom exacts—and who denies her sway?—
An epilogue to every five-act play."—DR. PANGLOSS.

So does custom warrant an author, in introducing his work to the public, to offer a few words concerning its intent and purpose. In the first place, I do not think it necessary to apologize for this publication of my book, nor for the nature and form of its contents. I have often been strongly impressed with the lively interest manifested by the public in matters relating to the stage, not only before but also "behind the curtain;" and as my public and private recitals, depicting the varied features of dramatic action and the peculiar traits of actors, have always met with favor from my auditors, I have been induced to transfer my professional impressions to the printed page.

"*The Stage*" is a phrase of very comprehensive character. I have not attempted to cover all the territory which it may indicate, but have

reserved to myself the privilege of adhering to or departing from its literal meaning, as far as has been necessary for the development of my plan, or, more properly speaking, the arrangement of my subject-matter.

I need not inform my readers that I am inexperienced in the art of book-making. If they should have confidence enough in the author and interest enough in the title of his book to undertake the reading of the accompanying pages, they will have sufficient reason, I feel, to conclude that it is the work of a novice.

And now, having appeared before the public to introduce these "Recollections" to those who were my constant and liberal patrons in my *old vocation*, I retire to private life and, in the language of stage-apology for "short-comings," I throw myself and my book upon "the indulgence of a generous public."

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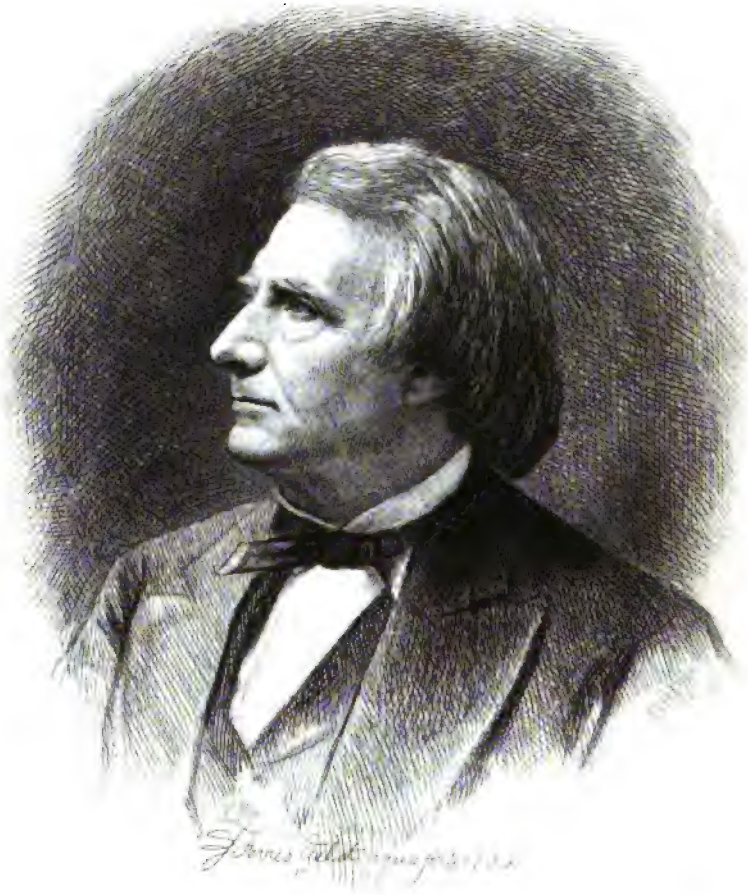

Truly Yours
James E. Murdoch.

THE STAGE

OR

RECOLLECTIONS OF ACTORS AND ACTING

FROM AN EXPERIENCE OF FIFTY YEARS

A SERIES OF

DRAMATIC SKETCHES

BY

JAMES E. MURDOCH

[*WITH AN APPENDIX*]

"All the world's a stage!
And all the men and women merely players"
SHAKESPEARE.

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A long association, in the spirit of a friendly and literary sympathy, wherein the Author has realized that grateful communion of kindred souls which makes men brothers—"Not in the fashion that the world puts on, but brothers in the heart"—impels him to dedicate these "Recollections" to

FRANCIS DE HAES JANVIER,

A firm and fearless advocate of the National Integrity, and a true exponent of the noble, the bright, and the beautiful in the realm of Nature.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR.

By J. BUNTING.

James Edward Murdoch, one of the most generally admired of American actors, was born in the city of Philadelphia on January 25, 1811. He was not of that stock from which actors or intellectual workers of any class usually appear. His parents were Thomas and Elizabeth Murdoch. The father was engaged in mechanical pursuits, finding time also to indulge somewhat in local politics, and in that close kinship with local politics which was even then, as afterward, manifested in the associations of the volunteer fire department. He was also a volunteer soldier, having served as an officer of artillery in the war of 1812.

The business calling of Thomas Murdoch was that of a bookbinder and paper-ruler. Those were the good old-fashioned times when the apprentice system prevailed—a system which produced so much hardship to boys, but which reared so many sturdy men. To avoid the hardships, and yet retain the advantages of the system, Thomas Murdoch took all of his four sons, one after another, into his own establishment, and taught them himself. Of these, James Edward was the eldest. He had obtained but a very moderate share of common-school education at the time of his entering upon the duties of his father's business, but the active, inquiring spirit of an American lad helped, in large measure, to supply this deficiency, which was still further improved upon by the systematic studies of a later period.

It is always interesting, when reviewing a public life which has won its honors in any special department, to trace, wher

ever it is practicable, the circumstances which led to such a result. It is, fortunately, quite possible to do so in Murdoch's case. The apprentice-boy, reared by the father in childhood and working at his side in youth, naturally imbibed his habits and associations. What Philadelphia boy of fifty years ago was there who did not long for the time to come when he might wear a painted hat and cape and carry a speaking-trumpet? As Murdoch grew up, but before he was yet old enough to join a fire company, he had become a member of a volunteer company of youthful militiamen. Not one of them was over fifteen years of age. Murdoch, at thirteen, was associated with the company when they were detailed to form part of the escort assigned to La Fayette at his grand reception in 1824.

Following thus after his father in military proclivities, he copied him also in due time by becoming a volunteer fireman, and it was in the engine-house of the old Vigilant Company that young Murdoch made his first speech, at a company meeting. The firemen in those days drew to their ranks some of the most intelligent classes of the community. In the hall of the Vigilant a debating-school was in full blast during Murdoch's membership. He entered its ranks with his accustomed enthusiasm, but soon demonstrated—to his own satisfaction at least—that he was not a debater. He next proceeded to profit by the discovery; and profited so well that, after a few of his spirited specimens of declamation, the debating-club resolved itself into an association of amateur actors, and found it necessary to secure a larger hall. It was here that Murdoch first presented an actual dramatic part entire, performing in the play of *Douglas* as Glenalvon, the villain.

At this period he placed himself regularly under the tuition of the late Lemuel G. White, an elocutionist who had previously taught another pupil destined to obtain great distinction—Edwin Forrest. Mr. White introduced Murdoch to the late Dr. James Rush, from whom he studied the science of the human voice and gathered many valuable principles which aided largely in adding to the charm of his readings and recitations.

It is a very strong evidence of Murdoch's progress in this amateur way that, before he was eighteen years of age, his efforts had won a circle of admirers who were not only the first to recognize his histrionic talents, but who never ceased to urge his claims as a national actor—one whose talents were destined to add lustre to the brilliant history of the American Drama.

In the year 1829 the Arch Street Theatre was already one of the chief places of amusement in Philadelphia. At that time the fraternity of actors was chiefly composed of performers brought from England. The manager of the Arch was the late Aaron Phillips. In October, 1829, he was playing an English company. Murdoch was already yearning for a place before the footlights, and youthful friends in large numbers were urging him forward. At last the matter-of-fact bookbinder, his father, so far succumbed to outside pressure that he engaged the Arch Street Theatre, company and all, from Manager Phillips for a single night, and on the 13th of October, 1829, James E. Murdoch made his first dramatic appearance in public as Frederick in Kotzebue's play of *Lovers' Vows*.

A large number of friends were in attendance that evening, among whom were some whose names afterward became locally prominent—those of Joseph Harrison, Jr., Andrew Kitchen, Ferdinand J. Dreer, and several others. Few of them yet survive. At the close of the play loud calls were made for the manager, and, upon his appearance, a formal request was made that Murdoch should be offered a standing engagement. As the company then playing was only under engagement for the time being, this demand could not be complied with. He was permitted, however, to play several characters, without pay, during the season, among them, Young Norval, Jaffier in *Venice Preserved*, and Octavian in *The Mountaineers*. At the close of the theatrical season a benefit was arranged for him, he appearing as Selim in a play called *Barbarossa*.

Although the audiences received all of these efforts with decided favor, they had no appreciable effect on the actor's fortunes, nor in elevating his position in the profession. This was owing to the peculiar etiquette which prevailed, preventing new players from assuming parts which were in possession

of established actors. But the results did have an effect on his father's mind. Thomas Murdoch said to the future actor, "You are choosing a new field. You cannot serve two masters, nor succeed in two callings. I know nothing about this stage business, but I do know that to prosper in it you must study and work. All the assistance I can give I will, but you must trust in the main to your own resources."

While this was really only a sort of moral endorsement, it had a practical effect and stimulated the young actor to fresh exertions. Influential friends greatly encouraged him. One promised to secure for him a scholarship at Princeton, in the secret hope, as was afterward learned, that he might become a great pulpit orator. But Murdoch's realm was destined to be the stage, and the stage looked too far away when seen over such a horizon. A more active career was offered. In the spring of 1830 he accepted an engagement as "walking gentleman" to play in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The salary was to be eight dollars a week, and his father paid his travelling expenses to reach his destination. Even in this subordinate position Murdoch's abilities became so apparent that he was soon tendered a benefit, producing therein the dramatic sensation of the season. The company, however, came to grief before the year was out, the manager going into bankruptcy. Murdoch was penniless, and his father wrote to a correspondent at Halifax enclosing the means, as he said, to "send the vagrant home."

At this critical moment the chances of making a good bookbinder and losing a promising actor seemed very fair indeed in Murdoch's case. However, it happened that Mr. John Sefton, himself an actor, was then in Philadelphia, looking up recruits for the travelling company of Vincent DeCamp. DeCamp was a brother-in-law of Charles Kemble, an actor of considerable ability, and a manager of experience. His company was then playing engagements in the South and West. Murdoch accepted a position in the same humble line as that at Halifax, but with the pay—or the promise of it at least—increased to eighteen dollars per week. He appeared in Charleston, Savannah, and other cities during the winter of 1830–31.

At Augusta, Georgia, he played his first leading part with this company at the special request of Edwin Forrest, who was then starring with the company. Forrest, being engaged to play Damon, was so dissatisfied with the Pythias offered by the management that he flatly refused to appear with him. DeCamp insisted that it was the best that could be done with the company then at his command. "No," said Forrest imperiously, "it is not. You have a man named Murdoch in your company whom I once saw act in Philadelphia. Give the part to him." The dramatic result was highly satisfactory to all parties.

The financial result of this engagement was less satisfactory. It ended, as the other had done, with a break-up. Murdoch managed to get home to Philadelphia, but with hardly a whole suit to his back. His affairs were the more desperate in that, anticipating from his DeCamp engagement a paying business, he had made arrangements to marry. He carried out this intention during the same year (1831), the wife of his choice being Miss Eliza Middlecott, the daughter of a London silversmith. At this time he was enjoying a precarious connection with the Arch Street Theatre. Robert T. Conrad, who was about his own age, proposed to write him a play. They were then, as afterward, warm friends and companions, and Murdoch of course favored the idea. Mr. Conrad's production was entitled *Conrad of Naples*, the part of the hero having been written expressly for Murdoch, and it was played with marked success at his benefit on the night of its initial performance. But a difficulty afterward arose from the fact, just alluded to, that no subordinate actor could be assigned a leading part save at his own benefit. The leading man took no interest in it, and the play of *Conrad of Naples* was shelved. Soon afterward the manager of the Park Theatre, New York, hearing of the circumstances attending its performance in Philadelphia, offered to bring it out there, but Murdoch could not gain permission to leave his unfinished engagement. Neither he nor Conrad had the necessary means to risk the venture, entailing, as it would, considerable expense for rehearsals and travelling bills. Years afterward an adaptation of *Conrad* by

the then eminent author's hand became known over the length and breadth of the country as *Jack Cade.*

It was during the year 1832 that Murdoch met with an accident, the effects of which have never been completely eradicated. During his connection with the Arch Street Theatre his wife fell ill. To the fatigues of his professional duties were added the cares of a sick-room. Weakened by overwork and anxiety, he was ordered a prescription for a severe attack of indigestion. In mistake he took a preparation of arsenic. The late Dr. George B. McClellan, who was called in, succeeded in saving his life, but said, "You will never get over it as long as you live." The ominous prophecy has proven true to the extent that Mr. Murdoch has rarely been able to endure the fatigue of lengthy engagements, and has spent a good portion of his most active years in retirement and out-door life.

After leaving the Arch, Mr. Murdoch's life for the few following years was nomadic. He first accepted the position of leading juvenile at the old Chestnut Street Theatre, where he played with Fanny Kemble. His health failing soon after being established there, he journeyed South under medical advice, going as far as New Orleans, but playing very seldom, Upon his return he attached himself to the company of F. C. Wemyss, appearing as home star alternately in Pittsburg and Philadelphia. His next position was at the Tremont Theatre, Boston, where he remained a year, but resigned to take the place of stage-manager at the Chestnut in this city.

It was during his incumbency here at this period that the celebrated production of the opera of *Norma* took place, at which the Woods (Mrs. Julia Wood, *née* Paton, and her husband) were the chief stars. Old playgoers will easily recall the sensation which the prima donna then made, and also the strong feeling of indignation which some of the doings of the Woods aroused both here and in New York. The sentiment with which they then regarded Americans was very similar to that which Dickens put into print two years later in his *American Notes.* The Woods received four hundred dollars per night for their services, and were wisely prompt in collecting it. After they were paid there was mostly nothing left for the company, and

both Murdoch and his associates were obliged to play for weeks without receiving a dollar of their salaries. When this could be no longer endured, Murdoch appealed to Mrs. Wood to allow the actors of the company at least the receipts for one night, and wait for her money until the close of the week. This she refused to do. He then told her the theatre would have to be closed the following night. She laughed at such an impossible event. He went at once into the office, and wrote and posted a bill stating that the Chestnut would be closed until further notice. It remained closed for a number of weeks.

During the same season of 1840–41, Murdoch accepted the position of stage-manager at the National Theatre of Boston to assist in the first production in that city of *London Assurance*. So great was the desire to see this play that a copy of it had been taken down by a stenographer in the pit of the old Park Theatre, New York City, where it was first played in America. It had in Boston what was considered at that time an unprecedented run.

It might have been mentioned before this that Mr. Murdoch had, from the beginning of his public appearances, felt an acute sense of the advantages to be derived from more exhaustive study than his opportunities had thus far permitted. His comparative successes, however much they satisfied his friends, did not by any means satisfy himself. The opportunity which he now found, or rather created, for deeper readings and more complete research, took, at first, the somewhat abrupt and unexpected form of a retirement from the stage. While still in the successful management of the National, acting under the advice of such prominent men as Governor John A. Andrew and Hon. George S. Hillard, both of whom had been his pupils in elocution, Mr. Murdoch decided to turn his attention to lecturing and teaching. He appeared before the Boston Lyceum with a lecture on the "Uses and Abuses of the Stage." This was followed by other lectures, both in Boston and New York, which were favorably commented upon throughout all of the larger cities. In private life he was not idle. It has been already mentioned that, while under the tuition of Mr. White in Philadelphia, he had made the acquaintance of Dr.

James Rush of that city. To Dr. Rush's vocal theories, as exemplified in his work on *The Philosophy of the Voice*, Murdoch became an avowed convert. He has never since ceased his efforts to promulgate Rush's views both by precept and example. A thorough study of the anatomy of the vocal organs secured for him credentials from the leading medical men of New England. At the same period he studied rhetoric with Prof. William Russell of Boston, and, in connection with that gentleman, prepared a work on *The Cultivation of the Voice*, which was published by Ticknor & Co., and has since been used extensively as a text-book.

Murdoch returned to the stage in October, 1845, appearing at the Park Theatre, New York, for the first time as Hamlet. This appearance seems to have been generally regarded as the beginning of his greatest period—a period which continued, with very few interruptions, until 1860. His widely versatile round of characters, his ready assimilation with both comic and tragic parts, and his almost equal success in both, made him henceforward a leading light on the American stage. For the intellectual refinement of his stage conceptions he had no equal. His fidelity to the text of his author was always remarkable, and he never sought for any declamatory effects which were not the legitimate results of faultless elocution.

One of the most successful and, at the same time, most interesting of Mr. Murdoch's theatrical engagements occurred in the year 1853. In consequence of an invitation from Mr. Lewis Baker, he visited California under that gentleman's management. He was supported in an extensive repertoire of parts by Mrs. Baker (formerly Miss Alexina Fisher), a lady well known in theatrical circles, and an estimable actress. She was for a long time associated with Murdoch, appearing as Juliet, Pauline, and other leading characters. At that date the new El Dorado was a land of adventure, if not of romance. The California book of Bayard Taylor had already given a graphic description of the situation of affairs there in 1849 and 1850, when the gold-fever first broke out. Mr. Murdoch was one of the earliest pioneers in the histrionic department of art to visit that then remote region. It was partly owing

to this circumstance, and largely because the best dramatic art is apt to be most immediately recognized everywhere, that this California engagement was exceedingly profitable in a financial point of view. Mr. Murdoch played for a season of about one hundred nights in San Francisco, Sacramento, Stockton, and Marysville, receiving from numerous audiences the most profound and sincere demonstrations of approval.

In the year 1856, Mr. Murdoch visited England. While this trip was taken with the intention of making it a journey of rest and recreation, the reputation which had preceded him secured a very flattering offer of an engagement from Mr. Buckstone, manager of the Haymarket Theatre, London. Buckstone had already acted with Murdoch during a brief visit to America, and was very anxious to secure him. The result was the longest consecutive list of performances which he ever played. His parts here were exclusively in comedy, being young Mirabel in *The Inconstant*, Charles Surface, Alfred Evelyn, Rover in *Wild Oats*, Don Felix in *The Wonder*, and Vapid in *The Dramatist*. The London season continued for one hundred and ten nights, at each of which Murdoch's name headed the bills. He next repaired to Liverpool, where the most flattering prospects awaited him. He was there even more successful than in London, playing, in addition to his usual round of comedies, Hamlet, which was exhaustively and carefully criticised. His conception of Hamlet was at this time favorably compared with those of Kean and Macready, and, particularly, as resembling that of Charles Young, a famous Hamlet of the Kemble period. In the midst of this success ill health obliged him to cut short this engagement, besides cancelling others in Edinburgh, Dublin, and other cities.

After a severe attack of his old illness he recovered sufficiently to travel in Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. While on this brief tour Murdoch paid particular attention to the study of vine-growing. Three years before he had purchased an extensive farm in Southern Ohio, and resolved to devote it to grape-culture. Upon his return to America he carried this plan into effect, securing the services of some

Rhenish farm-hands who were well acquainted with the grape and its habits.

During the interval between Mr. Murdoch's return from Europe and the breaking out of the civil war he played numerous engagements in all the prominent cities of the Union, with all the honors and profits of a popular star. He spent also a considerable share of his time on his farm, which is situated in Murdoch, a post-village named for him and not far distant from Cincinnati. An amusing occurrence which shows the drift of the period is worth noting here. One morning he was aroused by a prodigious outcry in his barnyard, and, going out, found one of his men contesting with an immense eagle for the possession of a frightened calf. Murdoch captured the eagle, which was a splendid specimen, measuring six feet across the wings. This little incident got into print, and the paragraph went the rounds as paragraphs will. Charles Barras, the author of *The Black Crook*, took it up and prepared a witty brochure, with comic cuts, entitled *How Murdoch vanquished the American Eagle.* In 1860, Mr. Murdoch was playing an engagement at Charleston, South Carolina. Here he met with an accident which confined him to his hotel for several days, where he was attended by a prominent physician. Upon asking for his bill he was informed that there would be no charge. On being pressed for an explanation, the doctor said emphatically, "I have no charge against the man who vanquished the American eagle."

It has been often said that the actor can do less for posterity than other men. He is a part of the history of his country, but not of its deeds. The works of the painter still glow on the canvas, the poet's songs are still sung, but the actor's art dies with him, or lives only in the uncertain realm of memory. It has been Murdoch's rare opportunity to so associate his name with the fortunes of his country, at a time of national trouble, that it may be fairly said of him, the patriot's bays will rival the actor's laurels. While playing at Pittsburg, in the troublous spring of 1861, news reached him that a favorite son had joined the army. He closed his engagement abruptly, and went to Washington. While there he

associated with many prominent citizens in encouraging the patriotic spirit of the then aroused nation. On one occasion, when a meeting was being held, Colonel John W. Forney, then Clerk of the Senate, requested Murdoch to recite Drake's poem of "The American Flag." The effect was prodigious. The audience was in an uproar of enthusiasm. Simon Cameron said to the reader afterward, "I never before in my life felt the full meaning of a flag to fight for." Such were the circumstances attending the commencement of those patriotic readings which, springing from Colonel Forney's happy suggestion, and continuing afterward under his special care, extended to both houses of Congress and permeated the hospitals and homes of the entire country, and which, even more than all his talents and acquirements as an actor, have endeared Murdoch to the popular heart. From that time onward he gave himself up as absolutely to the country as any soldier on the field. He gave readings in all the cities of the North, in the soldiers' hospitals, in the camps of the army on the field—wherever there was money to be raised or fainting courage to be cheered. The amount of good done could scarcely be overestimated. Its money-value alone was very great, although that was the least part of its worth. His friend Thomas Buchanan Read, who had just finished his poem "The Wagoner of the Alleghanies," was persuaded by Murdoch to loan him the manuscript, and the poet and actor first rehearsed it in the Ohio log cabin of the latter. The readings of this poem were wonderfully successful, particularly in the cities and towns of Pennsylvania. Janvier's "Sleeping Sentinel," Bryant's "Battle-Field" and Whittier's "Barbara Frietchie" were also immense favorites. But the pathetic side of this period—perhaps, indeed, the most truly dramatic one also—was connected with the actor's readings at soldiers' camp-fires in the field—sometimes within sound of the enemy's guns—and in the numerous army hospitals. Many of the scenes which resulted from his elocutionary efforts on such occasions were really thrilling, and in keeping with that wild time. On one occasion, at an invalid camp near Indianapolis, after reciting Bayard Taylor's poem, "General Scott and the Veteran,"

Murdoch was surrounded and almost overwhelmed by an excited crowd of veterans who rushed to his desk, eager to testify their appreciation of the poet's heroic sentiments as thus impressed upon them by the reader's ringing and eloquent utterances.

For a number of years after the war closed Murdoch remained in close retirement on his Ohio farm. So little did he mingle with the outside world, and so close was his privacy, that it is said old friends and admirers who visited Cincinnati, upon inquiring for him and knowing that his residence was in the vicinity, could not ascertain its locality. Grape-culture still occupied his outdoor life, and the study of his old profession formed the recreation of his leisure hours. A series of lectures and essays on elocution were also prepared, based on the theories of his early preceptor, Dr. Rush. Murdoch's advocacy of these theories has already been referred to in this narrative. To use his own words, the Rush method is "the only one which gives a mastery of the meaning of sentences, extracting the pith as well as producing the sounds." During the past year he has given a course of readings and lectures before the School of Oratory in Philadelphia. There has even been some prospect of seeing him again on the stage, and, in October last, an effort was made to have him appear on the fiftieth anniversary of his life as an actor. Since his great successes a new generation has grown up, with new methods and in many respects a new dramatic ideal. It would be extremely interesting to compare the manners and methods of the veteran actor with those which are now familiar.

Mr. Murdoch's days of work are not done, nor will they be while his life continues. His temperament is, as it has always been, one of extraordinary mental activity, and, whatever else may be allotted to him in the future, he has already traced the record of a busy, a useful, and an honored career.

APRIL, 1880.

THE STAGE.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRAGEDIAN, AND HIS RELATIONS TO THE POET.

THE intellectual rank which is due to the tragedian is, as yet, among the many unsettled points of criticism. There have been writers who question his title to any place, even the humblest, in the domain of genius. His vocation has been classed among the merely mimetic and mechanical—those in which the human being approaches the inferior natures by which he is surrounded.

The player's whole function, it has been said, demands nothing more than passively to take on the feeling and the character prescribed him, to find outward look and voice for the creation of the poet's brain, and to say over the very words set down for him by another.

Acting is deemed by such authorities in art and criticism to be but a process of putting on, a trick of feigning, a facility of assuming, an art of juggle and imposture—a thing which any one can do who has a talent for mimicry and who will descend to exercise it.

We are told of the contest between Cicero and Roscius for the palm of excellence in the art of expressing the emotion of the soul—between the orator with his language and the actor with his physical expression and gesture—and that Roscius received the prize.

Does not this antique record place the power of the actor on a higher intellectual plane than that which is commonly assigned to the mimetic art, when associated with what we will venture to term the highest effort of human genius, a great tragedy?

The authors who would belittle the actor's genius, and deny him even the smallest share of the poetic element, "reason a little, presume a great deal, and jump to a conclusion." They overlook the two prime facts of the case: first, that the graphic presentation of a thought or the perfect delineation of a character, when the conception of it has originated in the mind of another, demands "a soul capacious of such things." The mere silent reader of Shakespeare, who passively submits the surface of his mind to the influence of the poet's genius, is but poorly impressed with the passing sunshine and shade of thoughts not his own; he is at best but half conscious of them, as "they come like shadows, and so depart."

From those whose perceptions are so transiently affected by dramatic impressions can come no rule by which to judge the true merits of the performer, he who in the act of study passes, as it

were, out of self-consciousness, and identifies himself with the spirit and genius of the author, making his conceptions the mould into which he pours his whole being, taking on the fresh and deep impression of every thought, and reflecting, as a mirror before the auditor's mind, an exact and perfect image of every trait of the original.

A true receptive power is by no means the passive and servile thing which a superficial criticism would make it. Let us say, rather, that it demands an assimilating and co-operative soul, a positive genius, to develop it.

In fine, we assume that the entire apprehension of a poet's conception demands a feeling congenial to that glow which originally kindled it, an imagination allied to that which moulded it into form. Such must be the receptive faculty of the actor who aspires to the front rank of tragic excellence.

But this is not all. The player is, in soul and body, to give back the impression he has received. He is to work as an artist on the plastic material of his own nature—to give substance and shape and palpable reality to the imaginings of the poet. He is to master, in the electric flash of a moment, the whole art of stamping a true and vivid impress of the poet on the minds of his audience.

Feeling and imagination and will must become intensified passion ere the inspired utterance can create afresh the character that originally sprang to life in the soul of the poet.

Who has ever thought of denying the original-

ity of the genius of those great masters of the sculptor's art, Phidias and Praxiteles, on the ground merely that they copied the model of Homer's mind? Do we look with a feeling of secondary interest on Flaxman's noble illustrations of the bard because they are faithful to Homer? When we look at Retsch's masterly outlines which illustrate the plays of our own Homer, the Bard of Avon, do we think of saying, "It is all a mere trick of imitative art, working on a prescribed model"? Is not the wonderful fidelity of those exquisite drawings to that model their great charm? Is it not because we see Shakespeare shining through the whole that we accord them the first rank among the productions of modern art?

So should it be with the player. He is to throw his whole nature so copiously into the world of Shakespeare's conception that the "molten soul" overflows its limits and infuses itself into the hearts of his audience.

It is this exuberance, this redundancy of feeling, which transcends the mere assimilative function, that stamps the true actor a man of expressive genius and power. This is the art not merely of receiving Shakespeare's inspiration, but of giving it forth.

True artistic expression, in whatever form, demands not only the impulse and the fire, but that "which is of fervor all compact," the creative power of genius; and this is as true of high cultured tragic personation as of the masterly delineations of poetry, painting, and sculpture.

The dramatic impersonator, then, is successful in his art in proportion as he represents his author by becoming absorbed in the character delineated by the poet. I do not mean to say, however, that the actor must forget his own identity and be the reality of the part he acts; for in that case a bad man might become fit company for the gods, and a good man so transform himself into a fiend as to be able to play the very devil. Dr. Johnson said the same thing of Garrick. When the critics said that great actor was Richard himself, his reply was, "Then my friend Garrick must be a very bad man."

The genuine artist will exhibit in his representations of Shakespeare's characters the great attributes of his master's expression—*simplicity*, *nature*, and *truth*—as in presenting Milton's soaring conception of Satan (which originally existed in its author's mind embodied in a dramatic form) he would portray the loftiness of that spirit "not lost, in loss itself."

From these imperfect hints may be inferred the theory of acting and reading which, in my view, is or should be the student's guide. To the player who reflects on the qualities of the various authors whom his profession calls him to study, Shakespeare, the great model of his art, stands distinguished, as is universally admitted, by his perfectly natural manner, whether as regards plot, incident, character, or language. To personate Shakespeare, then, he feels that he must take his cue from Nature, and that from her he

must receive every prompting of genuine inspiration.

Here, however, when the artist has schooled himself out of rant and pantomimic trick, and every other prominent vice of the stage, he needs all the aid of a just and critical judgment; he is in danger of erring in one of several directions. Leaning to the safe side, as he deems it, of a just exposition of his author, avoiding the grossness of mere stage-effects, and adhering strictly to his text in a merely faithful enunciation of its words, the actor fails of truth and Nature, ceases to personate, and sinks into a mere elocutionist and declaimer. "Words, words, words" form the sum and substance of his performance. But the heart and soul, of which the words were meant to be the medium, are not there. No aspiration of ardor do we hear, no tremulous tone of heartfelt emotion, no sob bursting from the overcharged bosom, no unconscious attitude of passion do we see, no intuitive power in word, look, or action flashing sympathy to the soul of the spectator, no ecstasy of the whole man.

But instead of these qualities, so essential to a proper dramatic effect, we have the chilly attributes of paraded precision and heartless formality in action and utterance.

High-sounding and measured declamation swells out the text—correct and distinct, it may be, indeed, as to the words, but deadened to every effect of spirit and expression. In such counter-

feit presentment of human passion the art "whose end both at the first and now was and is to hold the mirror up to Nature," falls down to the monotonous delivery of a sermonized lecture or the recitation of a school-boy's task. The actor who under such circumstances imagines he is adhering to Nature because he is not tearing a passion to tatters, has formed but a low conception of the province of the stage, which is to hit off life itself, and to use language but as a means to this end.

The true delineator, in order to give proper effect to premeditated speech, must observe and employ the grace, fitness, and power of utterance which mark the flow of thought and rush of feeling when language springs from the event and circumstance of every-day life.

He who would fill others with the fervor of his own feelings must be able to mark his language with the elements of expressive vocality and incisive and vehement utterance. Thus only can be expressed the workings of the soul when distracted with conflicting passions or driven to despair and madness by outrageous fortune. Every thought of the mind, every passion of the soul, has its peculiar quality of voice and its appropriate mode of utterance.

Dramatic expression, of all the forms of speech, requires a profound knowledge of such natural effects, as well as the practical ability to employ them. Truly, from the Shakespearian view, the office of dramatic reading or recitation is no slight affair. It demands a clear expression of every

word, the music of impassioned feeling in every tone, and the reality of life in every look and action; and along with all a marked individuality of character, emanating from the conceptions of the performer, but divested of his personality.

By such means only can the hearer be transported from the ignorant present of actual surrounding life into an ideal world of remotest time and space. The personal traits of the speaker or reader of Shakespeare when obtruded on our notice are always offensive, because they break up the beautiful illusion which the drama was meant to create. No such falling off, however, is so chilling, perhaps ridiculous, as when the great historical or ideal hero of a piece descends into the "tricks of habit" by which we recognize the individual in his relations to daily life.

Individuality is a trait inseparable from the efforts of genius, and, chastened and subdued into its proper place and kept subordinate to the display of the author, it is always a source of pleasure. But the cant of the times about naturalness, originality, and creative power on the stage has gone nigh to tempt the player to such a style of personation as appropriates both the stage and Shakespeare to himself, and swallows them up in the inordinate self-esteem of the individual.

Another and a very different theory of acting is exhibited by those performers who wish, as it were, to inspire the author, instead of being inspired by him, and to add all manner of stage-

effects to sustain, as it were, the character and the writer. Players of this class are prone to the fault of taking a character in Shakespeare as they would an outline or sketch prescribed in a pantomime, which the ingenuity of the performer is to fill up, and consider language merely the vehicle for the display of "stage-business," as it is technically termed. Hence arise those melodramatic attitudes, groupings, and tableaux with which modern acting abounds, and which go to make up the attraction of some individual celebrity. From such a perverted and vitiated dramatic taste arise those unnaturally natural, familiar, and coarse effects which dispel all illusions and destroy all ideal harmony.

The term *Nature* is one of vast comprehension. It has widely different meanings, according to the mental character of the individual who makes use of it. Nature in a picture is, with one man, nothing but "Dutch boors, candlesticks, and cabbages;" with another it is all nymphs, temples, and wreathing garlands, dancing satyrs and hovering cupids.

A true idea of Nature—Nature heightened by the inspiring touch of ideal beauty and perfection—plain, sincere Nature, raised to its own highest capability by the hand of genius, may be found in an evening scene by Claude, where actual objects, faithfully portrayed, are grouped anew, mellowed into the dim golden dusk of twilight, and tinged with colors in the very act of fading into the coming gloom of night.

In vain do we look for Nature in mere bald

and harsh reality. The landscape of crag and brake and sluggish pool is naught for pictorial art till we can look on it in the flush of sunrise or in the lingering glow of sunset. In vain do we look for Nature in the narrow scope of the mere individual. Divest the man of his representative relation to all humanity, and what is he worth to the sculptor, the painter, or the poet? He sinks into an unshapely mass, or a personal portrait for a parlor wall, or a fit subject for a pasquinade.

How different from Shakespeare's idea of a man, as uttered by the lips of Hamlet when he pours out his filial admiration of the person and presence of his father!—

> See, what a grace was seated on this brow;
> Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
> An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
> A station like the herald Mercury
> New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
> A combination and a form indeed,
> Where every god did seem to set his seal,
> To give the world assurance of a man.

A fitting illustration of Shakespeare's ideal of dramatic action, its truth to Nature, and the importance of language as its prime element, may be found in *Troilus and Cressida* (Act I., Scene iii.—the Grecian camp before Agamemnon's tent), where he shows us plainly his contempt for the unnatural and barbarous style of presentation which was a prevalent and deforming feature of the acting of his own time:

The great Achilles, whom opinion crowns
The sinew and the forehand of our host,
Having his ear full of his airy fame,
Grows dainty of his worth, and in his tent
Lies mocking our designs: with him Patroclus
Upon a lazy bed the livelong day
Breaks scurril jests,
And *with ridiculous* and *awkward action,*
Which, slanderer, he imitation calls,
He pageants us. Sometime, great Agamemnon,
Thy topless deputation he puts on,
And like a *strutting player, whose conceit*
Lies in his hamstring, and doth think it rich
To hear the wooden dialogue and sound
'Twixt his stretch'd footing and the scaffoldage,—
Such to-be-pitied, and o'er-wrested seeming
He acts thy greatness in: and when he speaks
'Tis *like a chime a-mending; with terms unsquared,*
Which, from the tongue of roaring Typhon dropp'd,
Would seem hyperboles. At this fusty stuff
The large Achilles, on his press'd bed lolling,
From his deep chest laughs out a loud applause;
Cries "Excellent! 'tis Agamemnon just.
Now play me Nestor; hem, and stroke thy beard,
As he being drest to some oration."
That's done, as near as the extremest ends
Of parallels, as like as Vulcan and his wife:
Yet god Achilles still cries "Excellent!
'Tis Nestor right. Now play him me, Patroclus,
Arming to answer in a night-alarm."
And then, forsooth, *the faint defects of age*
Must be the scene of mirth; to cough and spit,
And, with a palsy fumbling on his gorget,
Shake in and out the rivet: and at this sport
Sir Valour dies; cries "Oh, enough, Patroclus;
Or give me ribs of steel! I shall split all
In pleasure of my spleen." And in this fashion,
All our abilities, gifts, natures, shapes,

> Severals and generals of grace exact,
> Achievements, plots, orders, preventions,
> Excitements to the field, or speech for truce,
> Success or loss, what is or is not, serves
> As stuff for these two to make paradoxes.

It may, I think, be inferred from this graphic portraiture of burlesque and bombast that, though it was common to his fellows, it was not Shakespeare's mode of delineation, and hence to the marked difference in his style of acting from that of his fellow-actors is to be attributed the fact that the dramatist was not considered as good a performer as those whom the groundlings applauded. In fine, Shakespeare was a poet, and knew the value of language should not be discounted by the exaggerations of the actor.

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. Oh, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious, periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise; I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it.

FIRST PLAYER.

I warrant your honor.

HAMLET.

Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action;

with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of Nature; for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was, and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to Nature; to show Virtue her own feature, Scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. Oh, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of Christians, nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of Nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

FIRST PLAYER.

I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

HAMLET.

Oh, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them; for there be of them, that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though, in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered. That's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it.

The exaggerating attempts, under false ideas of what is natural, to make everything in dramatic representation seem as real as possible, proceed upon the assumption that Nature is found only in the actual and the real, while the natural in expression lies ever nearest to the ideal.

In attempting to make what in stage-language is called a "point" of some feature of bare reality,

the actor is liable to betray a tendency to mannerism, because in striving to be strictly natural he will probably exhibit what is only natural to himself; and that may be habit, and not Nature.

But when, on the other hand, under the influence of a poetic spirit, he aims at the delineation of some image, he loses self in the picturing of the mind, and seems "breathless as we grow when feeling most," wrapt in the solemnity of dire imaginings, where nothing is but what is not, or soaring on the wings of aspiring thought "to pluck bright honor from the pale-faced moon."

From such mental workings emanates the perfection of expressive power in the utterance of figurative language, and not from the cold promptings of rationality or realism. Let us for a moment picture to ourselves the actor of Macbeth moving and speaking under such influences as I have attempted to describe, and we may, where he is under the sway of superstitious dread, feel in his utterances the very form and semblance of the heaving surges of destiny, remorse, and despair. Such impressions are made on the mind of the hearer for the reason that the actor has transformed himself for the time being into a creature of the poetic world, and gives out his mental conceptions and the fervor of truth poetic as well as natural, not coloring imagination and fancy in the material hues of personal mannerism.

In the former case, as before stated, the truth of the effect is lost in the too palpable attempt to create it by an approach to reality; in the other

it is secured and heightened by the fact of the external giving place to the presence and power of the internal working of the soul.

It is in the masterly treatment of the poetic element of the drama that the skilful actor demonstrates the fact that the truest and best effects of the stage are such as come nearest to the impressions received in the silent reading of Shakespeare when the student gives himself up to thought. Then it is, as Shakespeare himself has so strongly expressed it, the brain, wedded to the soul, "begets a generation of still breeding thoughts."

It must be conceded, from the view presented by a just representation of the Shakespearian drama, that the actor living, moving, and speaking through the argument of the play, impersonating in voice, gait, and gesture the characters as they sprang from the brain of the Poet, exhibits, when within the bounds of proper conception and delivery, a more graphic and satisfactory delineation of Shakespeare than can be presented by a mere reading of the language, however true to natural expression the method might be. The purely intellectual effect which a studious reading of the text can make upon a cultivated mind we do not here intend to call in question, but merely to speak of that indefinable gratification which is enjoyed when the imagination fully realizes all the moving incidents of dramatic action and all the impressive features of living character, native and to the dramatic manner born.

CHAPTER II.

IMITATION AND MIMICRY.

IN justice to myself and to my profession, I would impress upon the minds of my readers the fact that it is entirely foreign to the purpose of this presentation to ridicule any of the performers whose mannerisms I have considered proper subjects for illustration. My aim is to recall to the minds of those familiar with the subject the peculiarities or vocal eccentricities which have rendered the style of certain actors remarkable, and to enable those who may not have seen the originals to form some idea of their manner of acting, or at least of reading; for, without intending to confine myself to matters concerning the elocution of the stage, it is mainly the manner of reading among actors that I shall comment upon and in which I am most interested.

To the mere acting of the stage—that is, the personal bearing, modes of action and gesture—I shall only refer in a passing way; such being the mere physical attributes of performers, and of less importance to the public than the more intellectual qualities of voice and speech. In that department the profession was once considered a

model; how it is now I leave the public to decide.*

In introducing these illustrative sketches of actors I find it expedient to disregard the unities of time in the histrionic record, in order to bring within a reasonable limit the most effective elements of my subject; that is, to string together some instructive ideas concerning traits of the spoken language of the stage, together with professional incidents, entertaining and amusing in their nature, but carefully guarded from a spirit of detraction or malevolence.

One of the peculiar features of the stage is the almost universal custom of adopting, or striving to imitate, the personal traits of vocal quality or the articulative habits of some popular actor. It is remarkable that during certain periods or theatrical cycles the generality of young actors have been imitators or followers of some favorite celebrity.

From Betterton's time down to the present, the regular links of the dramatic chain of professional mannerism can be formed into groups distinguished for the sameness of their vocal mechanism, while they bear unmistakable marks of a strongly-contrasted opposite character.

A century ago elocution of a declamatory style was the prevailing dramatic tone, but, yielding to the changes of fashion, it gradually assumed the form of what was termed natural speech; which

* John Walker and Thomas Sheridan, the lexicographers, were dramatic performers, the latter especially of distinguished reputation.

in its turn, at the dictate of novelty, became eccentric, and, however paradoxical it may appear, unnatural. Of late years the elocution of the English and American stage, with but few exceptions, has been, no matter how offensive the term may be considered, rather a matter of instinct than the result of intelligent vocal culture.

The traditions of the stage have arbitrarily determined the kind of voice and the mode of speech appropriate to the villain, the hero, and the lover. Shakespeare ridicules this tendency among the actors of his time when he makes Bottom, the amateur actor, affirm that he prefers a tyrant's part, because he can then speak in "the Ercles vein"—that is, "tear a cat and make all split"—while as a lover he would speak in a "monstrous little voice." The fashion still exists; that is, that each character should have a distinctive quality of voice and mode of utterance peculiar to itself, thus ignoring the fact that every passion of the human soul has its own vocal sign, dictated by natural laws and common to the human race, and that every emotion and passion has also a conventional verbal sign.

Therefore, all natural expression depends upon the proper blending of the vocal sign with the words used to express the mental state of the speaker; and hence it will be seen that every person, though marked by peculiarity of utterance (the result of habit), should use an intonation and a quality of voice, as before affirmed, common to all in the utterance of impassioned

language. But, instead of observing this law, the actor in many cases seems to have accepted certain freaks and fancies of speech for the true natural signs, as the Hudibrastic astronomer was misled by the accident of the kite's tail flashing across his telescopic vision, and so mistook a lantern for a luminary.

Every new star is supposed to have received a special revelation from Nature, which if not, as the scholar says, "the divine afflatus," has at least the traditionally divine ring of the dramatic metal. Wherefore, it is considered imperative that the natural voice of the actor, if he happens to have one, must be permeated with the flavor of the stage. No matter how much his unaffected vocality may possess of clear resonance and beauty, it must be colored and toned to the requirements of a fictitious standard ordained and enforced by the oracles of the dramatic temple; therefore, almost all the actors and readers of the present day have their unmistakable archetypes in Liston, Kemble, Mathews, and Kean, the Keeleys, Buckstone, the elder Booth, Fanny Kemble, and Ellen Tree. These performers, in turn, but copied the various manners of voice in vogue at the time in which they were taking their first steps in the profession.

Sir William Davenant received from Taylor, who acted Hamlet under the direction of Shakespeare, the manner of reading, the stage-business, and other particulars concerning the performance of the play common in the author's time. Davenant

imparted the knowledge he derived from Taylor to Betterton, and to that fine old actor such performers as Barton Booth owed that professional knowledge which enabled them to hand down to their posterity the traditions of the stage. But, like the tones of the Greek and Latin syllables, the voices of the old Shakespearian players, with all their modes and forms, have vanished into air; yet the tones of the glorious old sugarloaf-headed Poet—as S. S. Prentiss, the poetic orator of the South, used to style him—still live in his immortal verse, which all can reproduce who care to seek in Nature for the true vocality common to all our race.

As an illustrative instance of the same tendency to reproduce vocal impressions on this side of the water, we refer to Mr. Forrest, whose peculiar intonations are duplicated all over the country—not only on the stage, but also in many individuals in private life, who have sacrificed their own vocal individuality to adopt the deep chest-tones of America's first distinguished tragedian.

As before stated, such tendencies are not confined to the stage, for Shakespeare's quick insight into the habits of mankind gives us an instance of this proneness to follow fashions. Lady Percy, speaking of her dead lord—Hotspur, as he was commonly called—says of his honor,

> It stuck upon him as the sun
> In the gray vault of heaven; and by his light
> Did all the chivalry of England move
> To do brave acts; he was indeed the glass

Wherein the noble youth did dress themselves;
He had no legs that practised not his gait;
And speaking thiek—which Nature made his blemish—
Became the accents of the valiant;
For those that *could* speak *low* and *tardily*,
Would turn their own perfection to abuse
To seem like him; so that, in speech, in gait,
In diet, in affections of delight,
In military rules, humors of blood,
He was the mark and glass, copy and book,
That fashioned others.

Before Garrick's time the English stage was marked by a mannerism which belonged to "the fashion of the day." A lingering relic of the old chanting tone of the Church affected the prevailing style of actors and orators, but was particularly observable in the collegians' ideal of Greek and Roman oratorical dignity as illustrated in their declamations.

The Puritans droned through the nose, and spoke in curt and formal tones, while the more cheerful Cavaliers assumed a nonchalant or gay method of speech, sometimes brisk and even boisterous; while in the court-circles conversational tones were tinctured with a certain kind of finical softness, the unmistakable characteristic of the courtier's speech. In one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays the following lines express the courtier's attributes:

Love those that love good fashions,
Good clothes and rich; they invite men to admire 'em
That speak the lisp of the court.
Oh, 'tis great learning!

> To ride well, dance well, sing well, or whistle courtly,
> They're rare endowments.

Miss Kemble (afterward Mrs. Siddons), in her first interview with Mr. Garrick, was complimented by that manager for not having the regular "tie-tum-tie," or "old song-like tune," of the stage. Again, it is recorded that Henderson, the great rival of Kemble, when quite a young man was told by Garrick that he had too much "wool or worsted" in his voice to suit the area of Drury Lane's auditorium; meaning that his voice was too much muffled or veiled by his stage-elocution, and lacked clearness and other penetrative qualities; in short, that his utterance was not natural—not exercised in conformity with natural vocal laws, and consequently inefficient in the expression of thought and passion as they should be presented in dramatic action.

During my apprenticeship in the Southern theatres as far back as 1830, I was impressed with this peculiar intonation, which was exhibited in a remarkable manner by some of the old English actors of the theatres in which I performed. It was a regular rise and fall of the voice, in a kind of declining run, gradually diminishing to the close of the line, recommencing on the next, and so continuing till the monotony became, to my ear at least, exceedingly tiresome. The emphatic words were marked with extended and repeated waves or swelling prolongations of sound, resembling the effects often observable in the reading of the

church-service. The gestures used were of the same measured formality as the movements of the voice, and their combined effects produced what was termed, by the younger members of the profession, "the old teapot style of acting;" which simply meant one hand on the hip, the other extended and moving in curved lines, with a gradual descent to the side. When the speaker was tired of this he simply changed his attitude by throwing the weight of the body on the opposite leg and going through the same routine of gesture.

Here may be detected a likeness to that old-time system of ease and elegance in studied deportment which Mr. Dickens hits off so admirably in his well-known character of Turveydrop.*

From the remark made by Mr. Garrick concerning the professional "tie-tum-tie" or sing-song tendency, we may infer that his own style must have been free from any such chanting uniformity.

The more liable the personal manner of an actor is to be mimicked, the more he is subjected to a suspicion of non-conformity to the laws governing natural speech. All the vocal signs of thought, emotion, and passion—constituting quality

* John B. Rice, Esq., who made his first appearance as an actor in Philadelphia about the time of my own advent, had been trained at school in this old declamatory style of speaking, and before he broke himself of its habits was called "Walker Elocution Rice." This gentleman, however, in the fulness of his theatrical career was better known by the titles of manager, mayor, and Congressman, for after acquiring a fortune as a manager in Chicago he was elected three times mayor of that city, and finally, on an exceptionally honorable record, was chosen member for Congress. He died at Washington, D. C., while in the discharge of his duties in the House of Representatives.

of voice, elevation and depression of pitch, abruptness or evenness in force, rapidity or deliberation in movement,—all these distinctly different parts of expressive utterance are the common attributes of spoken language, and are exercised more or less by all orators, actors, and readers. Yet, in consequence of a difference in the temperaments of human beings, these constituent elements of speech are practised by different persons in varying and modifying degrees, each individual fixing his own habits of utterance, which stamp him among his familiars as differing from his neighbors.

Hence it will be seen that any strongly-marked peculiarity observable in a speaker distinguishes him from others just in proportion to the prominence and extent of the peculiarity; and it is evident that any unusual or eccentric mode of speech will be the salient point seized upon by the imitator or mimic, either to create a laugh at the expense of the person or to give a more pleasing impression of his manner. The former method indicates the mimic; the latter, the imitator.

There is a much greater distinction existing between the qualities of imitation and mimicry than may strike the superficial observer. Properly speaking, when we take great and virtuous actions for our models we imitate them. It was said in olden times that heroic actions were imitations of the gods. And again it has been said that we ape the manners of those above us, while

it is common to say the monkey mimics the man. From this it must be conceded that imitation is a more intellectual effort than mimicry.

It is more difficult to imitate the natural qualities of an actor's voice than it is to reproduce his mere mannerisms; while to mimic his defects is within the reach of a very ordinary gift. An actor who imitates another—that is, one who adopts another's style as his own—is more likely to reproduce the faults than the perfections of his model. Blemishes, being more striking, impress themselves more forcibly than beauties, the appreciation of which requires a more delicate and intelligent perception. Imitation generally exaggerates defects in order to make them apparent to the minds of those to whom they are presented; and by the same rule a coloring is given to points of excellence in order to make them effective. So the unnatural imperfections of an actor's style may readily be imitated, while it would be difficult to reproduce the natural beauties of his delivery.

By a misplaced or oft-repeated use of some favorite form of expression, or by some peculiarity of accent or pronunciation, an earnest speaker may produce unpleasant monotony, or even grotesque results susceptible of caricature, and thus afford the mimic an opportunity of creating ridicule. This may easily be accomplished by the mocker from a habit which gives him a ready command over the organs of speech.

But the most palpable hits, the most enjoy-

able with an average audience, are made by seizing on some deformity of manner or some extravagant mode of speech—some mincing nicety, affected grandeur of tone, musical cadence, or other marked style of intonation. And such a burlesque imitation may be made by persons wholly unable to read correctly a single sentence in their own way.

Thus much for the principles of imitation in speech. And now let us glance at the means of "taking off," as it is termed, the personal traits of physical singularity.

The mimic finds his strongest point in observing and reproducing in extravagant form some characteristic gesture or posture, perhaps a swaying of the body, a shake of the head, or it may be a drawing back of the corners of the mouth, protruding the lips, depressing the chin, or obstructing the free use of the lower jaw and constricting the muscular action of the larynx; all of which peculiar movements are the legitimate means of producing the varied effects of a marked quality of voice. They are the proper agents, when used understandingly, for the purpose of expressing the various emotions of the speaker's mind. But when such marked vocal means are used unwittingly, or suffered to color the current of continuous discourse from choice, they become stumbling-blocks in the way of true expression.

Mr. Charles Mathews the Elder, one of the most accomplished mimics of the English stage,

availed himself of all such accessories of his art, and produced his effects in a perfectly artistic manner. By tying a handkerchief over his head in different ways, drawing up his coat-collar behind, or by brushing his hair back from his face or up in what was termed the "cock's-comb style," he presented a laughable portraiture without the assistance of vocal idiosyncrasies. A working of the brows, a wink of the eye, a twist of the mouth, or dropping of the chin,—each or any of these tricks, variously adapted to his ever-changing modes and qualities of voice, was sure to start a laugh upon the most stony face; and when to all this was added his exquisite wit, no one could withstand the fun of the laugh-provoking gentleman.

Mr. Mathews has had many imitators, and, as far as grimace and sheer buffoonery go, aided by "shocking bad" hats, grotesque coat-collars, and dreadfully exaggerated spectacles, they have produced considerable merriment; but they lacked the crowning point of the mimetic art, which with him consisted in a thorough knowledge of, and control over, the causative mechanism of the voice, by which he was enabled to mimic everybody and entirely obscure his own identity.

In connection with this subject I will mention a remarkable case where it will be difficult to draw the line of demarcation which I have stated as existing between mimicry and imitation. Half a century ago, among the celebrities of Philadelphia, Dr. C—— was distinguished not only for

his well-known professional ability, but for his wit and story-telling propensities. He had what is termed a cleft palate, and his voice was affected, as is usual in such cases. This peculiarity of speech gave great point to his story-telling accomplishments, and made them still more conspicuous.* On the first appearance of the elder Mr. Mathews in this country, and while engaged in Philadelphia in one of his "Budget performances," he introduced an imitation of the doctor by relating one of the stories he had heard him tell in private; the audience was taken by surprise, and applauded the actor's joke and the doctor's story "to the top of its bent." When Mr. Mathews was encored he came forward and said, in the peculiar manner of the doctor, "Ladies and gentlemen: I am constrained to say that it is bad enough to be subjected to Mr. Mathews' imitation, but it is still worse to find my fellow-citizens are anxious to have a second dose of it."

This by no means decreased the amount of laughter, and in the midst of the uproar it was

* The following witty play upon words is said to have been made by Dr. C—— after dining with some gentlemen at a hotel. While sitting over the wine and cigars the gentlemen had formed themselves into groups; at one end of the table the doctor was the attraction, while at the other was a gentleman who was familiarly known as Sam ——. He had been called on to sing. Another person had been asked to confer the like favor on the group where the doctor sat. Without knowing their mutual intent, the two gentlemen raised their voices at the same moment. This of course caused both to desist; at which the doctor rose and said, "Oh, of course the gentleman at the *head* of the table has the precedence; besides," said he, pointing in that direction, "I would rather hear psalm- (Sam) singing," and then pointing to the party at his own end of the table, "than hymn- (him) singing."

found that one of the audience (a well-known and influential merchant, advanced in years) had gone off into laughing hysterics. He was carried home, and laid upon the floor in one of his parlors in a terrible state of spasmodic laughter, totally unable to control himself.

His physician, Dr. C——, was sent for, and speedily came. Upon seeing his patient he exclaimed, in his usually brusque manner, "You infernal old jackass! what are you braying about in this obstreperous manner?" Whereupon the patient, rolling over on the floor, cried out between the paroxysms, "Oh, take him away! take him away! or I shall die with laughing!" Shakespeare says, "One fire burns out another's burning," etc.

The story was soon told, at which the doctor set to laughing in a most boisterous manner, causing a revulsion in the state of the patient, who thereupon fell to crying, and in good time was put to bed, while the doctor sought an early opportunity of getting even with the laughter-loving player who had taken him off, and nearly done for his patient by taking him off too.

One morning, in company with Mr. Mathews, I was rehearsing a farce of his in which there are only two characters. He was suffering from rheumatism, and not at all in an amiable mood. The smoke from the burning of some greasy matter found its way to the stage, at which Mr. Mathews cried out petulantly, "Oh dear! oh dear! what's that? Now that's unbearable! Such a stench! Where *can* it come from? Poh!

poh!" I told him the stage-carpenter lived in the back part of the theatre, and I supposed the odor came from the kitchen. "Ah, ah, that's it! that's it—'beefsteak *done brown*.' You Americans don't know how to cook; you *burn* everything up. You know the old story: 'Heaven sends meat—the devil sends cooks.' Hey? hey?" I laughed, and we went on rehearsing. However, I had the better part of the laugh—"in my sleeve," as the saying is—for I knew the property-man was burning his lamp-rags under the stage (we had no gas then, but used fish oil), and the smell that had offended our olfactories was something widely different from the cooking of a beefsteak. Considering the Englishman's proverbially "rare taste," this did no credit to his sense of smell.

Mr. Charles Mathews, Jr., in speaking of nervousness, told me he considered his father a perfect martyr to his profession. "For," said he, "his anxiety to have things 'just right,' to hit the exact effect so squarely as to leave nothing to be questioned, grew, with his advancing years, to be little less than a disease. He would spend day after day and week after week rehearsing 'the business' of a new entertainment, and when the night came no novice ever suffered more fearful anxiety at a first appearance than did this veteran of a 'thousand engagements.' At the opening of one of his 'Evenings,' called 'At Home,'" said my informant, "while I was in front noticing the 'effects,' I observed an old-fashioned, comfortable kind of man, with his wife and daughter, who

occupied a conspicuous place, having his silk handkerchief flattened like a pancake on his bald head. Very soon his eyes closed and he settled himself back in the seat for a snooze. 'Now,' said I to myself, 'if father observes this napping chap, there will be Old Scratch to pay;' and, sure enough, he did find out the delinquent, and thereupon began to talk at the man, and to fidget, fuss, and splutter to such an extent that I thought he would certainly 'get out in his words.' However," continued Mr. Mathews, "he got through the first part, and I went 'behind' to see how he was getting along; but, oh dear! such a state of irritability as I found him in I cannot describe. He burst out with, 'Did you ever see such an exhibition?'—'Why, it was a perfect success,' I replied.—'No, no, no!' said my father. 'Charles! Charles! I tell you he will be the death of me, that old muff with his handkerchief slipping over his eyes and his head nid-nodding like a plaster image on a mantel. Oh, it's dreadful! I can't go on, Charles, unless you stop him, turn him out, or abolish him. He'll destroy me! he'll destroy everything!' I therefore went in front, and found an opportunity to get at the old gentleman before the curtain rose again, and told him he would oblige me if he would not go to sleep. At which he began in the most pathetic manner to express his regrets, saying, in a way which attracted the attention of the audience, 'Why, is it possible that I annoyed my dear old friend Mr. Mathews? Why, I am sorry indeed; I can never forgive my-

self for such a thing. To be sure I will keep awake. I really am ashamed that I should be guilty of falling asleep while my old friend was being so funny. Never fear, sir; I'll *keep awake*, sir!'

"All things being ready, the curtain rose for the second part, 'and all went merry as a marriage-bell.' But oh, terrible to relate, the old muff, now fully aroused to the necessity of keeping awake, and, I have no doubt, alive to the fun which was shaking the sides of the audience, began to laugh until he at length made himself 'the observed of all observers.' You must see, of course, that this threw things 'out of the frying-pan into the fire,' as the old saying has it. For father, more disgusted now than ever, began to show unmistakable signs of a disturbing element in his acting which threatened an explosion; and not until the curtain fell was I free from the apprehension that he would (unable to bear the infliction) cry out, 'I'll give five pounds to anybody who will choke that laughing hyena or carry him out!' However, the performance came to an end without such a disaster taking place, while father's good-nature, after the excitement had passed off, found real enjoyment and a hearty laugh at the sleepy 'old muff,' with the red bandanna handkerchief for a wig, whose nid-nodding had nearly turned the tables on the comedian, by causing him to choke with anger when he was striving to convulse others with merriment, and who had afterward set the audience in a roar by out-laughing the laughers."

CHAPTER III.

THE PLAYERS OF A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

THE following lines from Churchill's *Rosciad* so aptly illustrate the subject of my remarks that I am induced to think the reader may not find them so familiar as to think their introduction out of place:

By turns transform'd into all kinds of shapes,
Constant to none, Foote laughs, cries, struts, and scrapes;
Now in the centre, now in van or rear,
The Proteus shifts—bawd, parson, auctioneer.
His strokes of humor and his bursts of sport
Are all contain'd in this one word—*distort.*
Doth a man stutter, look asquint, or halt,
Mimics draw humor out of Nature's fault;
With personal defects their mirth adorn,
And hang misfortunes out to public scorn.
E'en I, whom Nature cast in hideous mould,
Whom, having made, she trembled to behold,
Beneath the load of mimicry may groan,
And find that Nature's errors are my own.
Shadows behind of Foote and Woodward came;
Wilkinson this, Obrien was that name.
Strange to relate, but wonderfully true,
That even shadows have their shadows too!
With not a single comic power endued,
The first a mere, mere mimic's mimic stood;
The last, by Nature form'd to please, who shows
In Jonson's Stephen which way genius grows,

Self quite put off, affects with too much art
To put on Woodward in each mangled part;
Adopts his shrug, his wink, his stare—nay, more,
His voice, and croaks; for Woodward croak'd before.
When a dull copier simple grace neglects,
And rests his imitation on defects,
We readily forgive; but such vile arts
Are double guilt in men of real parts.
By Nature form'd in her perversest mood
With no one requisite of art endued,
Next Jackson came. Observe that settled glare,
Which better speaks a puppet than a player;
List to that voice: did ever Discord hear
Sounds so well fitted to her untuned ear?
When, to enforce some very tender part,
The right hand sleeps by instinct on the heart,
His soul, of every other thought bereft,
Is anxious only where to place the left;
He sobs and pants to soothe his weeping spouse—
To soothe his weeping mother turns and bows;
Awkward, embarrass'd, stiff, without the skill
Of moving gracefully or standing still,
One leg, as if suspicious of his brother,
Desirous seems to run away from t'other.
Some errors, handed down from age to age,
Plead custom's force, and still possess the stage.
That's vile. Should we a parent's faults adore,
And err because our fathers erred before?
If, inattentive to the author's mind,
Some actors made the jest they could not find,
If by low tricks they marr'd fair Nature's mien,
And blurred the graces of the simple scene,—
Shall we, if reason rightly is employed,
Not see their faults, or, seeing, not avoid?
When Falstaff stands detected in a lie,
Why, without meaning, rolls Love's glassy eye?
Why? There's no cause—at least no cause we know:
It was the fashion twenty years ago.

Fashion!—a word which knaves and fools may use
Their knavery and folly to excuse.
To copy beauties forfeits all pretence
To fame; to copy faults is want of sense.

"The heroes before Agamemnon had no poets, and they died." What a world of suggestion is contained in such a saying! and how fortunate have been the actors whose characters, and impersonations of character, have been admired and cherished by poets and historians!

Garrick, as a necessary consequence of his profession, has left no material evidence of his art that can be tested by the criticisms of the present, so that his merits must be viewed through the sketches of the past—of contemporary appreciation or prejudice. The age in which Garrick lived and acted was noted for its literature and its taste in art. He was popular with all classes, and the social equal of his educated admirers; therefore, the record of his merits as a man and his talents as an actor has come down to us with all the advantages of cultivated tradition.

It must be remembered that as a manager he was enabled, by his controlling power, to keep competitive acting out of his way. No performer was tolerated in his company whose peculiar characteristics marked him as a rival. In the parts he had made, as it is said, his own, no one was allowed to appear except upon conditions and under circumstances which he dictated and controlled. Even his female performers were subject to that jealousy which brooked no rival near the

theatrical throne. It has been said the mantle of his genius never descended to grace the shoulders of another as he wore it.* The same, however, cannot be said of his managerial habits of acquiring by all available means a lion's share of popular favor, and keeping it solely to himself.

The history of the drama, both here and in England, shows numerous instances of actors who by "managing means" have made them-

* Holland, a pupil of Mr. Garrick, under whose tuition he made some proficiency, though he seldom merited more praise than that of being a tolerable copy of a fine original, first appeared on the stage in 1755. He was a good-looking man, but had an affectation of carrying his head either stiffly erect or leaning toward one shoulder, which gave an awkwardness to his person, which was not otherwise ungraceful. Holland's ear was perfectly good, and he had great good sense, industry, and application, with a moderate share of sensibility. He had also a fine, powerful, melodious, and articulate voice, and by a constant attention to the tone, manner, and action of Mr. Garrick did not displease when he represented some of his most favorite characters, particularly Hamlet, Chamont, Hastings, and Tancred; in the last he manifested an uncommon degree of spirit. He was, however, always most correct when acting under the eye and immediate direction of his master; he was then scrupulously exact; and if he never rose to excellence, his endeavors to attain it merited and obtained the approbation of the public.

Next Holland came. With truly tragic stalk
He creeps, he flies—a hero should not walk
As if with Heaven he warr'd; his eager eyes
Planted their batteries against the skies;
Attitude, action, air, pause, start, sigh, groan,
He borrowed, and made use of as his own.
By fortune thrown on any other stage,
He might, perhaps, have pleased an easy age;
But now appears a copy, and no more,
Of something better we have seen before.
The actor who would build a solid fame
Must Imitation's servile arts disdain—
Act from himself, on his own bottom stand:
I hate e'en Garrick thus at second-hand.—*Churchill.*

selves stars of popular splendor while refusing others a chance to shine.

The charm of Garrick's acting, we have every reason to believe, was its naturalness and smoothness. It has been said that while he never startled his auditors with unexpected flashes of genius, he riveted their attention by an exhibition of matchless skill. He depicted the human passions as they were portrayed in the language of the character he represented, not only by his well-managed intonations and other expressive qualities of voice, but by disciplined art as a pantomimist. Hence he was enabled to captivate both the eye and the ear of his auditor. He thoroughly identified himself with the spirit of his author, and could delineate the passions in dumb show as well as by vocal power. He was a consummate mimic, a brilliant wit, a keen observer, and a practised man of the world, round whom celebrities might cluster and gather additional store of humor and social wealth.

From such a combination of artistic material and intellectual endowment, superadded to the graces of a lively poetic imagination, he could not fail to grasp the dramatic sceptre, and wield it with commanding effect among the subjects of the mimic scene.

At the same time that the wits, literati, and scientists of the age were his admirers at the "clubs," in domestic life they delighted to be welcomed at his own generous board, where were always to be found "the feast of reason and the flow of soul."

The age, too, in which Garrick lived and won and wore his distinctions afforded him an intellectual and cultivated audience, well calculated to inspire the actor with more than ordinary enthusiasm in the study and practice of his profession. The most distinguished men in literature, science, and art thronged the theatre, listened to the language of the play, and enjoyed the masterly delineations of the actors, not merely as a light and trifling mode of passing the time, but as a mental gratification, an artistic study, and a pleasing exhibition of human nature.

The ability of the great actor to distinguish himself among the wits of the day may be estimated from a reading of the following epigrammatic poems. It may be observed also that his peculiar way of dealing in theatrical affairs behind and before the curtain was not unknown to those who were his familiars in convivial matters and in professional pen-and-ink traffic.

Dr. Goldsmith's satiric wit was much affected by his good-nature, while the naturalness and simplicity of the man shone through even his most inconsistent and bitter invectives. The same cannot be said of Garrick, who may be charged with writing and saying brilliant and biting things for the mere love of the applause they produced. The two men were the antipodes of each other in nature and disposition.

As the story runs, on a certain festive occasion at a literary club the members agreed to write epitaphs on their fellow-member, Dr. Gold-

smith, in order to provoke him to reply in kind. Garrick's effort in this direction is chronicled in the following lines, entitled

JUPITER AND MERCURY: A FABLE.

BY DAVID GARRICK.

"Here, Hermes!" says Jove, who with nectar was mellow,
"Go, fetch me some clay: I will make an odd fellow.
Right and wrong shall be jumbled, much gold and some dross;
Without cause be he pleased, without cause be he cross:
Be sure, as I work, to throw in contradictions—
A great lover of truth, yet a mind turned to fictions.
Now mix these ingredients, which, warmed in the baking,
Turn to learning and gaming, religion and raking.
With the love of a wench, let his writings be chaste;
Tip his tongue with strange matter, his pen with fine taste.
That the rake and the poet o'er all may be seen,
Set fire to his head and give heat to his spleen.
For the joy of each sex on the world I'll bestow it,
The scholar, rake, Christian, dupe, gamester, and poet.
Though a mixture so odd, he shall merit great fame,
And among brother-mortals be Goldsmith his name:
When on earth this strange meteor no more shall appear,
You, Hermes, shall fetch him to make us sport here."

PORTRAIT OF DAVID GARRICK.

BY DR. GOLDSMITH.

Here lies David Garrick: describe him who can—
An abridgment of all that was pleasant in man.
As an actor confessed without rival to shine;
As a wit, if not first, in the very first line.
Yet with talents like these, and an excellent heart,
The man had his failings—a dupe to his art.
Like an ill-judging beauty his colors he spread,
And he plastered with rouge his own natural red.

On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting;
'Twas only that when he was off he was acting.
With no reason on earth to go out of his way,
He turned and he varied full ten times a day:
Though secure of our hearts, yet confoundedly sick
If they were not his own by finessing and trick,
He cast off his friends as a huntsman his pack,
For he knew when he pleased he could whistle them back.
Of praise a mere glutton, he swallowed what came,
And the puff of a dunce, he mistook it for fame;
Till, his relish grown callous almost to disease,
Who pepper'd the highest was surest to please.
But let us be candid, and speak out our mind:
If dunces applauded, he paid them in kind.
Ye Kenricks, ye Kellys, and Woodfalls so grave,
What a commerce was yours, while you got and you gave!
How did Grub Street re-echo the shouts that you raised,
While he was be-Roscius'd, and you were be-praised!
But peace to his spirit, wherever it flies
To act as an angel and mix with the skies!
Those poets who owe their best fame to his skill
Shall still be his flatterers, go where he will,
Old Shakespeare receive him with praise and with love,
And Beaumonts and Bens be his Kellys above.

Sir Joshua Steele, in his work on *The Measure and Melody of Speech*, published in 1775, gave an original notation of some points concerning Garrick's manner of reading. From this, as well as from observations in other quarters, I have been enabled to form an idea of the great actor's style.

The speech-notation of Steele resembles a sheet of music in appearance, the notes of speech being written on the five lines of the staff, minus the clefs and signatures. It marks the pitch of syllables, and their quantity and the time and rate of

movement. By this system a copy can be made of any speaker's mode of delivery, and read intelligently by another, who would thus be enabled to judge of the manner without hearing the recital.

Garrick's reading of Hamlet's soliloquy on death appears to have been an impressive and tranquil utterance of reflective thought, without impassioned or demonstrative emphasis or significant accentual stress; with little or no distinction of loud and soft, but nearly uniform, something below ordinary force, or, as Steele said, "sotto voce or poco piano." He also says Garrick was distinctly heard in the most subdued tones of his voice in every part of the house, while other actors around him, though often offensively loud, were scarcely intelligible. This essential quality of voice was doubtless owing to his well-managed syllabic quantities, wherein the tone was sustained with a uniformity of sound to the entire extent of the syllable. The upward and downward intervals were within the compass of thirds and fifths, except for unusual emphasis, while the movement of the voice was marked by deliberate rather than by rapid time.

Garrick's clearly-distinct and well-rounded tones of subdued or undemonstrative speech kept his audience in a state of mental quietude commensurate with the subject of his recital when his main object was to fix their attention and minister to their understanding; consequently, when he became aroused by the spirit of the language, they were in a condition to receive and appreciate the

stronger enforcements of his more impassioned presentations.

Such a judicious grouping of tone, time, and force must have been more agreeable to his audience than continuous intermingled and crowded impressions, the result of injudicious vehemence or monotony, such as marked the manner of many of the actors of that period.

Before the author of *The Measure and Melody of Speech* saw Garrick act he made a notation of what must have been the manner of the tragedian Mossop, who was the object of Churchill's poetic censure, on account, chiefly, of his unvarying tone and indiscriminate emphasis. His recitation must have been measured, grandiloquent, and stately, consequently inexpressive and tiresome. Churchill says:

> With studied impropriety of speech
> He soars beyond the hackney'd critic's reach;
> To epithets allots emphatic state,
> Whilst principals, ungraced, like lackeys wait;
> In ways first trodden by himself excels,
> And stands alone in indeclinables;
> Conjunction, preposition, adverb, join
> To stamp new vigor on the nervous line;
> In monosyllables his thunders roll,
> He, she, it, and, we, ye, they, fright the soul.

I may here remark that the "mouthing" referred to in Hamlet's advice to the players, as I understand it, is a measured uniformity of speech, which gives the same distinct utterance to the unaccented syllables as to those on which the accent

falls. This was Mossop's fault, the same that Shakespeare found with the recitation of his day.*

The phrase "trippingly on the tongue" means movement in speech, which strikes the accented syllable with a proper force and quantity, and passes lightly, though correctly, over the unaccented syllables of the line. This must have been Garrick's grace of utterance, and is what Shakespeare meant by these words, so frequently quoted and so little understood. The same idea is again expressed by our author in the following: "Whose name runs smoothly in the even flow of a blank verse."

* The following comments on the style of a certain orator apply so well to many of the actors of Garrick's time that I have given it a place as pertinent matter. The writer says of the subject of his article: "He is not an impressive speaker. There is, indeed, about him an appearance of impressiveness very likely to deceive for a few moments, but the illusion is soon lost, and the result is monotony and fatigue. Effect is so carefully calculated, so steadily aimed at, that it is missed amid the machinery which is used to produce it. The orator, no less than the actor, if he would move men, must now and then forget himself in his subject, or at least seem to do so. Mr. —— never forgets or seems to forget himself. He delivers himself in the large orotund, pompous way which is as much out of fashion as the Kemble school of acting, so far as we of this generation know anything of that school. The same allowance of elocution is meted to all parts of the speech, which therefore moves along a dead level, although the level is artificially forced to a sort of high table-land. The commonplaces of an address, the asides, the subordinate parts, are given out with the measured magnificence and deliberation which may properly belong to important utterances and eloquent climaxes. If Mr. —— were an actor he would deliver a footman's 'My lord, the carriage waits,' with the same pose, the same precision, the same volume, which he would give to Lear's curse or Othello's address to the senate. His method is the reverse of popular. It is opposed to the naturalness and the simplicity which the taste of the time demands in all kinds of art. We miss the relief, the nice proportion, the real repose, which is the last charm of oratory."

When Steele's notation of speech was explained to Garrick he asked if anybody, by the help of such notes, could pronounce his words in exactly the same tone and manner as he did himself. The reply was: "Suppose a great musician had written a piece of music, and had played it on a very fine violin, and then another performer had played the same composition on an ordinary fiddle with the same accuracy as the great master, though perhaps with less ease and elegance? In such a case, no matter how correctly the music might be played on the poor fiddle, nothing could prevent the audience from perceiving the difference in the instruments—that one was fine and beautiful, the other mean and execrable. And so, though the speech-notes, and the rules by which they are expressed, may enable a master to teach a just application of the expressive forms of speaking, they cannot give sweetness to a voice where Nature has denied such a gift."

Lord Monboddo, the author of *The Origin and Progress of Language*, says of Steele's notation: "Upon the whole, it is my opinion—and I find it the opinion of all the musical men here to whom I have shown it—that Mr. Steele's dissertation is a most ingenious performance. It is reducing to an art what was thought incapable of all rule and measure, and it shows that there is a melody and a rhythm in our language which I doubt not may be improved by observing and noting what is most excellent of the kind in the best speakers. In that way I should think that both the voice and ear of

those who do not speak so well might be mended, and even the declamation of our best actors may be improved, by observing in what respects they fall short or exceed; for as soon as a thing is reduced to an art, faults will be found in the best performers that were not before observed."

CHAPTER IV.

JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE, CHARLES KEAN, AND COOKE.

JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE, who followed Garrick, must be viewed as an actor entirely from the tragic standpoint. Coldly classic in his conceptions, dignified and deliberate in action, he seems never to have risen above the pall and gloom of the Tragic Muse. His acting and bearing upon the stage resembled the sculptured marble of the classic times or the heroic presentations of the historic canvas. It is said he suffered from asthma, and that his voice was deep and hollow, lacking in force, and of little variety save in the quality of pathos. His effects were confined within a proper range of height and depth, and marked with appropriate variations of quantity.

The late Dr. Walter Channing of Boston was a lover of Shakespeare and an ardent admirer of good speaking and reading. In his younger days he had heard the London celebrities of the stage, and remembered their several modes of speaking and the distinctive qualities of their voices. In comparing notes with the doctor I remember reciting for him Hamlet's soliloquy on death, after what I had considered Mr. Kemble's

manner of delivery, and which I had picked up from the traditions of the stage. He was surprised when I told him that I had never heard Mr. Kemble. "For," said he, "your imitation of his quality and movement of voice and intonation is certainly a well-marked presentation of the tragedian's manner, without, of course, the high coloring of a literal likeness." As I remarked to Dr. Channing, this might be attributable to my having acted frequently with Mr. Charles Kemble, whose manner in tragedy must have been a close copy of his brother's peculiarities.

The stately movement and the undulating swell of tone in altitude and depression which marked Mr. John Kemble's recitation must have been peculiarly adapted to grave and sombre effects, and, though it might tardily meet the requirements of abrupt and startling passion, it was fully equal to the expressive demands of intensified grandeur in declamatory force. Imagine, for instance, the majesty of Kemble's voice giving utterance to the o'erfraught soul of the proud Roman as expressed by Shakespeare's Coriolanus, when Tullus Aufidius tauntingly calls him a "boy of tears." The outraged hero, towering to the full height of majestic indignation, exclaims—

> Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart
> Too great for what contains it.—"Boy!" O slave!
> * * * * * * *
> Cut me to pieces, Volsces; men and lads,
> Stain all your edges on me.—"Boy!" False hound!

> If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there,
> That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
> Flutter'd your Volsces in Corioli:
> Alone I did it.—"Boy!"

Deliberate even in impetuous utterance, too dignified to be boisterous, and too haughty to be aroused to unbridled anger, the arrogant patrician would find expressive utterance in the full swell of "the orotund," the well-sustained force of "final stress," and every degree of the undulating "wave." Such forms and quality of voice only could exhibit the indignant astonishment and suppressed rage with which he greets the insulting epithet of a "boy of tears." Save in the one element of absolute force, in which he was wanting, there can be no doubt Mr. Kemble's voice was equal to the emergency of such a situation.

The movement and quality of Garrick's voice and speech, on the other hand, were comparatively shorter, sharper, and more rapid, and, it may be said, harder, consequently better adapted to the expression of incisive and fierce declamation or petulant and angry utterances beyond the limit of dignity, while for the expression of intensified heroism, love, and pity, or the mingled bitterness of scorn, hate, and rage, and for all such ardent presentations of human passion, the English Roscius must have appropriately worn the garland of the British stage.

Again, Garrick not only possessed the graces and force of vocal expression, but also all the physical attributes of action. His features were

adapted in an eminent degree to the faithful exhibition of every state of the mind. His person, though small, was at once compact and flexible, answering readily to the manifestations of fancy or will in all the forms of attitude, gesture, and the general adaptation of physical conformity to the creative promptings of the imagination or the more determinate phases of intellectual embodiment.*

I am indebted to Dr. Channing for the following interesting statement: The late Hon. Edward Everett, when a young man in London, called upon the distinguished tragedian, Mr. Edmund Kean, and received a few hints relating to his habits of articulation. Mr. Everett was told that he paid too much attention to his vowel-sounds,

* One of Garrick's distinguishing characteristics was his power of suddenly assuming any passion he was called to represent. This often occurred during his continental travels, when in the private rooms of his various hosts—princes, merchants, actors—he would give them a taste of his quality, Scrub or Richard, Brute or Macbeth, with which he identified himself on the instant. He once drew tears from his spectators when, in telling the story of a child falling from a window out of its father's arms, he threw himself into the attitude and put on the look of horror of that distracted father. We saw him, says a writer, play the dagger-scene in *Macbeth* in a drawing-room in his ordinary dress, surrounded by ladies and gentlemen, and as his eyes followed the air-drawn dagger the effect was so startling that the whole assembly broke into a general cry of admiration. Another writer says his studio was the crowded streets, and he perfected his great talents by the profound study of Nature. Again he says: "He has much humor, discernment, and correctness of judgment—is naturally monkeyish, imitating all he sees, and is always graceful, an admirable dancer, unaffected and natural." It is said that while sitting for his portrait he amused himself by running the whole scale of the passions, passing through imperceptible gradations from extreme joy to extreme sadness, and thence to terror and despair. It is even said that this ever-restless actor fairly frightened Hogarth himself. He has been known to set the green-room in a roar of laughter between the most affecting scenes of *King Lear*.

and did not, as the actor said, attack his consonants with determination; he should strike them with pronounced force at the beginning of syllables, and bite them off sharply when they end them. In illustration of this idea Kean recited the lines, "I hate thee, Harry, for thy blood of Lancaster," and others of a like kind. The distinct and powerful effect of Kean's articulation made such an impression on Mr. Everett that he took the lesson to heart and made it a special study. But he came near carrying this nicety of articulation to pedantic precision; exact and explicit as his enunciation was, one degree more of distinctness would have degenerated into affectation.

Let every initial and final consonant in the following passage be distinctly pronounced and given with marked deliberation: "A cup of tea spilled upon a lady's embroidered petticoat set the continent of Europe in a blaze; a few boxes of tea thrown into Boston harbor cost George the Third his colonies;" and the effect will be like Mr. Everett's measured utterance.

In the absence of expressive effort it may do to follow the time-honored injunction to distinctly stamp and round our words, "like newly-impressed coin fresh from the mint;" but where emotion or passion is concerned our words receive their vocal value from the clear ring of the metal, rather than from the completeness of form or impression.

In connection with his habit of over-nice precision, so called, in the utterance of the conso-

nants, it will be remembered that Mr. Everett gave to his vowels a peculiarly distinct vocality, which afforded a fine coloring to his speech and made it attractive in an elocutionary sense. On the contrary, actors who adopted the elder Kean's style made themselves ridiculous by a labored effort to give the consonants an undue share of articulative effect. In consequence of this affectation their vowel-sounds were smothered in the throat or obscured by husky aspiration. This studied "effect defective," as Polonius says, was particularly observable in the acting of Charles Kean, of whom it may be said that, while he imitated the striking peculiarities of his father's articulative methods, he lacked in a great degree the vivid and incisive powers of expression for which the latter was so highly distinguished.

The younger Kean had, in his turn, many imitators, who, falling short of his excellence as a finished tragedian, copied his eccentricities and exhibited only the objectionable features of his style. The consequence was, that imitation degenerated into mimicry, and while Mr. Kean's acting was applauded to the echo for its artistic details and breadth of dramatic force, the imitations of his speech, whenever presented upon the stage (as they frequently were) by low comedians, were received with boisterous applause and laughter.

The following lines will give a fair and unexaggerated impression of the specific characteristics for which both the elder Kean and his son were distinguished:

*C*an'st thou not *m*inister to a *mind diseased*,
*P*luck from the *m*emory a *r*ooted *s*orrow,
*R*aze out the *w*ritten *t*roubles of the *b*rain
And with some *sweet* ob*l*ivious antidote
*C*leanse the *s*tuffed *b*osom of that *p*erilous stuff
Which *w*eighs upon the *h*eart?—*Macbeth*, Act V., S. iii.

I am reminded here of an incident that occurred while I was acting, at the Haymarket Theatre, London, the character of Rover in *Wild Oats*—a part which affords the performer, from the many quotations he has to deliver, an opportunity of imitating the style of other actors, which is often freely indulged in, and generally applauded by the audience. On the occasion of my first rehearsal the well-known comedian and manager, the late Mr. Buckstone, remarked to me that as he and his brother-comedians had been so much in the habit of mimicking Mr. Kean, my imitation of him might not be recognized. I took the hint, although I shrewdly suspected that Mr. Buckstone's real meaning was a London audience might feel that a stranger had no right to take liberties with the eccentricities of their distinguished actor. Old Mirabel says of his son Bob, "Mr. Duritete, though I call my son hard names myself, you sha'n't do so; for, though Bob is a sad dog, remember he is nobody's puppy but my own."

Now, in order to show how far imitation may degenerate into mimicry, I will quote a few lines from the character of Shylock in the spirit of an article that appeared in London *Punch*, which

thus criticises Mr. Kean: "We don't like the acting of Mr. Kean, but we must acknowledge his antiquarian researches into the private habits of Shakespeare's Jew. In speaking of the means of Shylock's subsistence, by his peculiar pronunciation of the word 'means' he proves the Jew to have been a lover of vegetables, as thus: 'You take my house when you do take the prop that doth sustain my house; you take my life when you do take the *beans* whereby I live.'"*

From this it will be seen that the actor's peculiarities of articulation were so striking that the reference to a single word italicised as uttered by him could be made to create a broad grin wherever it was read.

In marked contrast to the dignified, unimpassioned, and coldly-impressive manner of John Philip Kemble was the acting of George Frederick Cooke, an actor who divided honors with that gentleman, and by some was even preferred to him. Mr. Cooke's voice was powerful and well sustained throughout—rather hard and sharp,

* The letters *m* and *n* are sounded by passing the breath from the glottis entirely through the nose; this gives to them a nasal effect, and adds to the quantity of such words as *means*, *move*. The letter *b* has an unmixed vocality, and is formed in the larynx, but the sound in its outward course has a modifying vibration in the fauces, the mouth, and the cavity of the nose. The vocality of the letter *b* is short and more or less abrupt. *Bat* is a short syllable, *man* a long one. Now, if the nasal murmur of the *m* be cut off, and the letter quickly sounded, the word *man* will sound like *ban*. The peculiar snappy sort of articulation for which the Keans were distinguished made the pronunciation of the word *means*, as it fell upon the ear, sound like *beans*. By closing the lips tightly, and then opening them quickly in the utterance of the word *man*, any person may prove the truth of the proposition.

but remarkable for compass—while the actor's entire command over it gave it a special effect in ease and rapidity of movement. In such a presentation we can readily perceive qualities which mark a direct departure from the Kemble rule as striking as that was from the previous standard of Garrick.

Kemble's acting was marked by a decidedly oratorical style of delivery, arising from his familiarity with the long and short quantities of classic verse. On the other hand, Cooke, it is said, wrote out his Shakespearian blank verse in the form of prose, in order to facilitate his study and break up a tendency to a rhythmic delivery. He always gave the language of his characters in the form of unpremeditated speech, divested of what Shakespeare calls the "even flow of a blank verse." Kemble's style may therefore be termed the poetic-dramatic, and Cooke's the dramatic-poetic.

Cooke, while excelling in such characters as Richard the Third and Lear, was unsurpassed in his impersonation of that remarkable character, Sir Archie MacSycophant. There is every reason to believe that it was an inimitable and unique impersonation. The broad Scotch brogue was sustained throughout in a perfectly correct and faithful manner, while his oily smoothness and craft were plainly traceable in every tone, look, and action of the heartless hypocrite and time-serving politician.

Such excellence in dramatic art was mainly attributable to the actor's mastery over his voice,

and his skill in adapting it to the play of feature and bodily action in the familiar expression of every-day life and character.

In such dramatic power Cooke was the equal of Garrick, whose Abel Drugger was considered the perfection of what is now termed "character-acting"—a performance in which the delineation of special traits of personal character is considered of more consequence than the artistic treatment of the language in which the dramatist has embodied the principles of humanity in the fitting garb of poetic imagery. Jefferson's Rip Van Winkle is a type of Nature in the former, while Booth's Lear was an exposition of the same in the latter sense. The "letter" of Rip's language is lost in the vitalizing power of Jefferson's tones, and by Booth's acting the auditor was raised to the intellectual plane of the author's language, thereby realizing the mental as well as the physical storm which wrecked the fortunes of the brain-struck Lear.

Next in order after his MacSycophant was considered Cooke's wonderful performance of Iago, of which it has been said of all the impersonators of that character he was the only one who never took the audience into his special consideration, or evinced a desire to make them "chuckle over" his successful villainy. On the contrary, though applauding him for the soldierly and social traits exhibited in his relations with Cassio, he never failed to create feelings of the bitterest hatred for his depraved acts and duplicity.

He gave to this protean character a pointedly varied and diverse complexion, fitted to Iago's several relations with the other personages of the play, each of his assumed dispositions being individualized and sustained; while his unassumed personal malignity was the crowning-point of artistic delineation.

To Othello he was the humble and earnest though seemingly over-watchful guardian of the honor of a respected friend, jealous of everything likely to detract from the dignity of the officer to whom he owed the duties of a trusted and valued subordinate. Avoiding a cringing servility, his manner was that of submissive though self-respecting obedience, and so he won the name of "honest Iago."

To Cassio his self-satisfied, free-and-easy soldier-like bearing became the snare. Never before was man entrapped by a more seemingly jovial and courteous invitation to an innocent indulgence befitting a special occasion, as a relaxation from the stern duties of war, than that which led the unhappy lieutenant to folly and disgrace. Yet the mask under which it was perpetrated was distinct and opposite to the one worn in the presence of the confiding and tortured general.

Toward the foolish Roderigo was turned, and faithfully, the aspect of a licentious, unscrupulous, but merry seducer to the basest of actions, which was logically presented as a gentlemanly recreation. By a well-sustained levity and jocose indifference, no matter how atrocious the sentiment

expressed, the victim was blinded to the real intentions of his crafty adviser, and accepted the proposed murder as a necessary link in a complicated chain of intrigue and villainy—a mere love-affair, common and excusable. Thus the stimulated and provoked lover accepted the situation without suspecting the personal object or motive of the tempting fiend. Such were the meshes which entangled the feet of Roderigo and dragged him to infamy and death.

The masquerade in every case was perfect and distinct from the personalities of the villain, thus fully interpreting Iago's own remarks in the early part of the play regarding himself:

> For when my outward action doth demonstrate
> The native act and figure of my heart
> In compliment extreme, 'tis not long after
> But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
> For daws to peck at: I am not what I am.

From the deep secrecy of that baleful centre of evil, so terribly illuminated in his soliloquies, flashed forth the fires of malignant hatred as fatal as the glance from the eyes of the death-darting cockatrice, while from between his clenched teeth hissed forth the withering words of resistless doom. Such, tradition tells us, were the marked features of Cooke's impersonation of Iago.*

* Doran says: "Kemble excelled Cooke in nobleness of presence, but Cooke surpassed the other in power and compass of voice, which was sometimes as harsh as Kemble's; and indeed I may say the Kemble voice was invariably feeble. In statuesque parts and in picturesque characters—in the Roman Coriolanus and in Hamlet the Dane—Kemble's scholarly and artistic feeling gave him the precedence; but in Iago, and especially

In my youth I was much impressed by the opinions of an old gentleman who was in the habit of hearing and enjoying, as he said, the language of Shakespeare rounded and sounded in his ear, until his understanding was illuminated and his emotional nature flooded with the sense and passion it contained; and he added that the degree of gratification he derived from the impersonation depended upon the actor's speech and his ability to merge his own feelings in those of the part he sustained without detracting from the naturalness of the author's portraiture. He was not a highly-educated man, but judged both author and actor from the standpoint of common sense and the impressions made upon his sympathies and passions. Mr. Cooke was always held up by him a head and shoulders above all his contemporaries as the embodiment of dramatic truth. While the elder Kean, he said, startled and surprised him, he made no impression save that of one whose impetuosity of temperament and vehemence of speech excited and bewildered the imagination, leaving the mind in the unsatisfactory state of confusion expressed by Cassio after his drunkenness:

in Richard, Cooke has been adjudged very superior in voice, expression, and style, 'his manner being more quick, abrupt, and impetuous, and his attitudes better, as having less the appearance of study.' Off the stage, during the progress of a play, he did not, like Betterton, preserve the character he was acting, nor, like Young, tell gay stories and even sing gay songs; but he loved to have the strictest order and decorum. Could he have carried into real life the scrupulousness which at one time he carried into the mimicry of it, he would have been a better actor and a better man."

I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly—
A quarrel, but nothing wherefore.

My old-fashioned critic, in speaking of Kean, used to say that he often uttered his speech as if he had a mouthful of hot potatoes. Strange as the remark was, it finds a fellowship with what Garrick said of Henderson's "wool-and-worsted" obstruction to vocality.

As an evidence of the estimation in which Mr. Cooke was held by the scholars of his time the fact may be cited that Mr. George Ticknor pronounced him the only perfect embodiment of natural acting he had ever seen, either in this country or in Europe. The impression made by Mr. Cooke's impersonation of Richard the Third was that of bold and manly defiance. There was an almost entire absence of the aspirated and smothered tones of fretful spite and complaint which in our day, with but one illustrious exception, have marked the acting of Shakespeare's boldest villain. Cooke's tone of voice indicated a man conscious of power and sure of success, who looked upon the physical obstacles in the way of his schemes as so many feathers which it only required a breath of his will to blow aside. The removal of obnoxious personages was to him a natural means to the accomplishment of an ambitious end, that end being simply the perpetuation of the kingly rule of the house of York, which of course meant the good of the kingdom wrought through the instrumentality of the axe and block.

The actor impressed his auditor with the idea that it was the inherent right of the strong to put the weak out of the way; which, by the by, was much the fashion of the times. Practically, he seemed to consider his deformities as something which entitled him to compensation at the hands of fortune for the ill turn Nature had done him. He sported with his infirmities in the spirit of an unrelenting philosophy, not attempting to shelter himself behind them or making them apologies for his hate.

On the other hand, the elder Kean by his hissing and snarling tones made the auditor feel that Richard, in the poet's phrase, "nursed his spleen to keep it warm." Hé excited within himself a constant state of ferocity and disgust for his infirmities of mind and body, and snarled out his hatred for the whole world. In short, he seemed to feel that if for a moment he lost sight of these incentives to mischief he would fail to execute his evil work. Thus the tiger, by his angry growls and the lashings of his tail, it is said, excites his passion to a state of intensified fury.

But Cooke, in a more comprehensive treatment of language, gave it a varied complexion. To the utterance of exalted thought he gave the clear ring of a pleasing vocality, and when under the lash of excited feeling his intonations were those which Nature has furnished for the expression of varying kinds and degrees of human passion.

CHAPTER V.

ANECDOTES OF ACTORS.

MR. THOMAS COOPER was the first distinguished star-actor on the American stage. He was an Englishman, and came to this country before he had won any marked distinction on the London boards. It is evident that he modelled himself, if we may so speak, halfway between Kemble and Cooke; for he exhibited some of the peculiarities of both those great actors, he being a young man and a rising performer when they were in the height of their popularity. He was endowed with a fine figure and a voice of great richness and compass, and was equally effective in tragedy and the higher range of comedy.

Without sinking individuality in his imitation, Cooper depended upon a certain imposing bearing and the power of his well-modulated voice, rather than upon the strong and determined effects of dramatic action which have since his time become so popular. In such characters as Damon, Virginius, Pierre, and William Tell he found the material for the special exemplification of his peculiar powers.

The distinction intended to be suggested here

is that which exists between the descriptive language of human feeling and passion and the more realizing effect of those qualities when illustrated in forms which present them direct from the sources of natural emotion. An exemplification of these different modes of treatment may be observed in a thoughtful contemplation of the language used by Shakespeare in illustrating men and manners, and in that of many of the elder dramatists, as well as in the impassioned poetry of Byron and other writers of that form of composition. In the one case passion may be said to speak directly from the central point of its creation in the human breast; in the other it is described as existing there.

This difference marks the dividing-line between dramatic poetry and the other forms—epic, lyric, and ballad.

The tendency to a declamatory style of delivery, with a voice pleasing in melody and harmonious in general effect, gave to Mr. Cooper's acting a character consonant with the spirit of the following lines from Otway's tragedy of *Venice Preserved*. His acting of Pierre was considered a grand exposition of the "romance of the stage."

JAFFIER.

I'm thinking, Pierre, how that damned starving quality
Called honesty got footing in the world.

PIERRE.

Why, powerful villainy first set it up
For its own ease and safety. Honest men

Are the soft, easy cushions on which knaves
Repose and fatten. Were all mankind villains,
They'd starve each other; lawyers would want practice,
Cut-throats reward; each man would kill his brother
Himself; none would be paid or hanged for murder.
Honesty! 'Twas a cheat invented first
To bind the hands of bold, deserving rogues,
That fools and cowards might sit safe in power,
And lord it uncontrolled above their betters.

JAFFIER.

Sure, thou art honest?

PIERRE.

So, indeed, men think me;
But they're mistaken, Jaffier.
I'm a rogue as well as they—
A fine, gay, bold-faced villain, as thou seest me!
'Tis true I pay my debts when they're contracted;
I steal from no man; would not cut a throat
To gain admission to a great man's purse or a lady's favor;
I scorn to flatter
A blown-up fool above me, or crush the wretch beneath me;
Yet, Jaffier, for all this, I am a villain.

JAFFIER.

A villain?

PIERRE.

Yes, a most notorious villain—
To see the sufferings of my fellow-creatures,
And own myself a man; to see our senators
Cheat the deluded people with a show
Of liberty, which yet they ne'er must taste of.
They say by them our hands are free from fetters,
Yet whom they please they lay in basest bonds;
Bring whom they please to infamy and sorrow;
Drive us like wrecks down the rough tide of power,
Whilst no hold's left to save us from destruction.

All that bear this are villains, and I one
Not to rouse up at the great call of Nature
And check the growth of these domestic spoilers,
That make us slaves, and tell us 'tis our charter!

Let the reader imagine the recital of such language by an actor of manly form and courtly bearing, with a fine resonant voice, of good compass, strong in head-tones, musical in cadence, and highly sympathetic, and a lively impression will be received of the physical characteristics which made Cooper a popular favorite in both comedy and tragedy.

Mr. Cooper was of a proud and rather overbearing disposition, but a well-educated man of the world, and possessed of social qualities that ensured him a hearty welcome in society. He had, apparently, but little respect for what the world knows as the opinion of Mrs. Grundy. For many years he lived at a little villa on the banks of the Delaware above Philadelphia. His daughter, an estimable and accomplished lady, who was on the stage for a brief period, left it to be married to Robert Tyler, the son of the ex-President. During the administration of John Tyler, he being a widower, Mrs. Robert Tyler did the honors of the White House.

Our tragedian was one day taking his usual stroll on Chestnut street, Philadelphia, when he went for a moment into the old State-House. Judge Robert Conrad, the well-known poet and dramatist, was presiding at court in one of the rooms appropriated to the holding of legal tribu-

nals. David Paul Brown, the distinguished criminal lawyer, was addressing the jury, and seated at the table within the prescribed circle fronting the judges were quite a number of members of the bar, while a crowd of people sitting or standing outside were watching the proceedings of the court. The case on trial was one of public interest in which an Israelite prominently figured—exactly how I do not now recollect.

Before proceeding with my story, however, I must say that Mr. Edwin Thayer, the accomplished gentleman and elegant comedian of the old school, as it is termed, was a constant attendant at the court-house in his hours of leisure, being fond of public speaking, and more especially of the arguments of distinguished lawyers. He was a particular friend of Cooper, though entirely opposite to him in disposition and habits. Mr. Thayer was shy of public notice (aside from his position on the stage), refined in his tastes, and punctilious in his deportment; while Mr. Cooper was of a free-and-easy bearing, fond of a joke, and, for a gentleman, at times rather boisterous in his manner.

Mr. Thayer, upon the occasion referred to, had taken a seat—which the courtesy of the lawyers often afforded him—within the legal circle, and occupied rather a conspicuous position. During a profound silence, while Mr. Brown was looking out an authority, Mr. Thayer heard his name distinctly pronounced; looking up he saw, to his astonishment and discomfiture, the unmistakable

personality of Mr. Cooper, with eye-glass in hand, standing right in the entrance to the inner bar. After saluting Thayer in the most familiar manner and with provoking indifference to the legal solemnity of the surroundings, the tragedian exclaimed, in the well-known words of Portia in the scene with Shylock, "Thayer! Thayer! which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?"

As Mr. Thayer afterward remarked, he was ready to sink through the floor, while laughter and confusion reigned over the scene in spite of judicial and legal dignity. Before order was restored the tragedian, having dismayed his friend and made his hit with the audience, disappeared, without waiting for the anticipated onslaught of the tipstaves, who were evidently ready to investigate his case; he having, in the language of the play, "disturbed cool Justice in her judgment-seat" by raising laughter and exciting applause.

During 1838 or '39, while acting in the city of Washington, it was my good fortune to become acquainted with the Hon. William C. Preston, U. S. Senator from South Carolina, and at one time president of Columbia College. Mr. Preston was a gentleman of very fine and commanding appearance, of classic culture and refinement, and one of the most distinguished orators of the day. His delivery was marked in an eminent degree by all the graces and beauty of a highly-cultivated and impressive style. His speaking in the Senate Chamber was always sure to call out a

large audience of admirers who were independent of any political bias.

In the course of a mid-day breakfast (or lunch, as we call it now) to which I was invited by Mr. Preston, that I might enjoy the society of some of his intimate friends, among the subjects discussed was that of public speaking. Mr. Preston remarked that in early life he had not paid especial attention to the study of elocution, for which the advantages offered in those times, even in our colleges, were very limited. And to show how he had been led to a more determined practical consideration of the subject, he related the following incident, which occurred while he was taking his final course of studies in the English metropolis. One night, after having seen Macready act, while lying awake revolving in his mind the many ideas he had received from the finished acting of the tragedian, and the new light which had been shed upon the author's language, he was suddenly startled from his reverie and sprang from his bed. The first impression was that a terrible crime was being committed, for prominent amidst the unearthly sounds which proceeded from the apartments below the cry of "Murder!" had struck upon his ear, apparently gasped out in agony. As he listened the sounds seemed to die away in suppressed, smothered tones. Again they became distinctly audible, and the voice assumed a weird character that seemed like the moanings of distress, at one time husky, and again hollow and sepulchral, with repeated exclamations of

"Sleep no more! sleep no more!" and "Murdered! murdered!"—all suggesting a fearful nightmare struggle.

Astonished and bewildered, Mr. Preston stood doubting his sense of hearing or the reality of the disturbing sounds, when again came "Murdered! murdered! murdered!" in every note of the gamut. No longer doubting, he sprang to the door and called loudly, over the banisters, to the dark void below, "Hallo there! hallo!" A door opened, and out flashed a candle and a night-capped head. Then came a voice saying, "Don't be alarmed, sir; don't be alarmed; it is only Mr. Macready the tragedian; he is dreaming, or acting in his sleep, or practising the words of his part. Don't be frightened, sir; we are all used to such things here, sir. We are all used to it, so don't be alarmed." The head and the candle disappeared, and Mr. Preston returned to his bed. The next morning an apologetic note brought an explanation. The tragedian, not being satisfied with his treatment of the murder-scene in his last performance, had been submitting the words "murder" and "murdered" to a kind of aspirated and husky utterance in different degrees, high and low, and, becoming interested in the trial, had forgotten the near proximity of the other inmates of the house, and had applied a more than usual degree of force to his experiments; and thus the mystery was explained.

"From that hour," said Mr. Preston, "I determined to pursue a different course in my ora-

torical studies, and began to test by practical methods the power of words and the expressive character of the tones severally belonging to their different rates of movement, variety of pitch, and other qualities. The consequence has been that my interest in language as a medium of expression has been considerably increased, my ear better tuned to an appreciative state of hearing, and my vocal powers very much improved."

A careful observation of the sounds peculiar to the different elements of speech has impressed me with the wonderful differences in the capacity of people to reproduce the inflections and intonations of a teacher's voice in elocutionary instruction, more especially where the pupil is expected to enunciate as the tutor does without the discipline of elementary details. The incapacity, in such cases, arises either from a lack of ear or inability to mark distinctions in sound, or, if able to do that, a want of ability to reproduce the sounds in accordance with any example given by the voice of another.

Fully recognizing these difficulties, I have often had occasion to smile at the painstaking but totally ineffectual attempts on the part of those directing stage-rehearsals to teach a subordinate actor some peculiar but necessary mode of uttering a sentence. Mr. Macready, who had drilled his own voice to the execution of the most minute intervals in syllabic utterance, was exceedingly desirous of having certain words spoken in a particular way, in order that the voice of the actor

addressing him might be entirely in accord with the tone of the sentiment with which he had to reply. In an artistic sense this was certainly proper, but I never knew an instance where the result in such cases was satisfactory. The reason is obvious: the directions are generally given in a nomenclature technical in its character and unintelligible to the person addressed, in addition to which the vocal organs, from want of discipline, are in most cases totally unable, at the command of the will, to produce, without considerable previous practice, those effects which are always promptly obedient to the demands of emotion and passion when invoked by the cultivated and experienced speaker.

A very striking illustration of this subject may be found in a stage-story related of Mr. Macready. In order, however, to give a proper idea of the point involved, it will be necessary to call the attention of my readers to a characteristic peculiarity of the great tragedian, the ordinary current of whose articulation was marked by a certain catching of the breath preceding the utterance of the initial syllable of certain words. A sudden catch of the glottis, which causes a short, cough-like sound to be heard previous to the articulative movement of the voice, was a distinctly-marked characteristic of Kean's utterance, never before observed in any other actor in this country. This peculiar organic act is the result of a dropping of the jaw and consequent depression of the larynx; it gives strength to the muscles which are called

into play and control the organs of vocality, thus enabling the speaker to execute that abrupt movement by which he expels the vowel-sound from what may be called the cavernous parts of the mouth—that space which includes the roots of the tongue, the glottis, and pharynx. This power, when joined to the guttural murmur or deeply-aspirated quality of the voice, is a strong element of expressive force in the suppressive utterance of passionate language in the drama. Like in kind, but differing in degree of force to the vocal catch of the glottis which I have referred to, is that remarkable effect so observable among public-speaking Englishmen, who exhibit a kind of iterated murmur along with an apparent hesitation, as it were, in the choice of words, recalling the one last uttered to supply its place with one more appropriate; it is this that causes that soft rattling sound in the throat which resembles the closely-repeated utterance of the letter *u* as heard in *up*, and forms a sort of muttering or grumbling effect of voice. I have attempted to explain this manner of speech, because I wish to show that it can be traced back as far as to the personal pronunciation of King George the Third. Dr. John Walcott, in a poem ridiculing the king, says of his eccentricities of speech—

> And lo! no single thing came in his way
> That, full of deep research, he did not say,
> "What's this? Hay! hay? What's that?
> What's that? What's this? What's that?
>
> * * * * *

"True," said the cautious monarch with a smile,
"From malt—malt—malt— I meant malt
All the while.
I did, I did, I did, I, I, I, I!"
So quick the words too when he deigned to speak,
As if each syllable would break its neck.

Such was the singular habit of speech which made the old king the object of ridicule among his subjects. There is no doubt that Garrick—who was nothing if not in the fashion, especially in court-matters—mimicked this peculiarity of the king, and finally came to adopt it in his own conversation off the stage. This was sufficient to make it fashionable among those who imitated the great actor's mode of talking. Tate Wilkinson, who used to mimic Garrick's manner in conversation, gave great prominence to his habit of quick speech and repetition of phrases in taking off the theatrical monarch. The following will give some idea of Wilkinson's imitation: "Hey! now, Wilkie, you know, Wilkie, you m-mustn't, uh, m-mustn't take me o-off, in-in your-r devilish funny wa-a-y u-uv making people l-l-laugh, uh-uh-you know, because, uh, you know, Wilkie, it doesn't do, you, uh, know, to make your-r manager ridiculous, uh-uh, you know."

Although a great mimic himself, and in the habit of taking off others in a most unwarrantable style, as it is said, Garrick was very sensitive about the mimicry of his own personal traits. Foote's imitation of Garrick's dying-scene in Lothario was an annoyance to Garrick and a delight to the town,

particularly at the concluding words: "Adorns my tale, and che-che-che-che-che-cheers my heart in dy-dy-dy-dying."

Now, next in line of succession, as we may say, was the elder Kean, who when a boy picked up this "trick of the tongue" from some follower of Garrick, and for the special effect he saw in it grafted it on the stock of his own manner of speech. But in Kean's case the catch of the glottis became a more positive movement than that used in conversation, and in connection with his other strongly-marked modes of utterance gave a wonderful and even startling effect to his delivery. In Kean's time the imitators were numerous, and finally Mr. Macready caught the infection; and, as every habit with that gentleman became second nature, he employed the catch of the glottis until it became strongly characteristic of his speech on and off the stage.

At the time I retired from the stage to lecture upon, and teach the principles of, Rush's *Philosophy of the Voice*—I think about 1843—in the adjoining law-offices of the Hon. George S. Hillard and the Hon. Charles Sumner I had the pleasure of meeting and becoming acquainted with Mr. William Macready. At the close of his American engagements, and before sailing for Europe, he took leave of his friends and acquaintances at an evening reception given by him in the spacious and elegant rooms of Papanti, Boston's celebrated dancing-master. The evening was occupied first with readings from Shakespeare and other poets,

and thereafter with a supper and social enjoyment. I well remember the admiration with which I beheld an elegant and refined gentleman offering an intellectual feast by his readings and recitations to some of the most distinguished ladies and gentlemen of a metropolis celebrated for its refinement and cultivated taste, and then mingling with the assemblage and courteously discharging the duties of a host. In contemplating such a scene I was glad to acknowledge Mr. Macready as a representative man of the profession of which I was a member.

The next morning, while enjoying a pleasant chat with Mr. Hillard, Mr. Macready came in and began an open conversation with Mr. Sumner, who acted as his legal adviser in a friendly way. He held in his hand a letter from Papanti, and appeared to be much irritated on account of a misunderstanding by which some extras had been introduced into his bill that the agreement did not justify. He became excited, and spoke with great *de*cision and *pre*cision. I was struck at once with the similarity of his every-day style of impressive speech to his dramatic method of dealing with language, and was convinced that his peculiarity of utterance in each case was a trick, as it were, of custom, rather than the result of intention. It is astonishing how easily persons may acquire habits of speech of which they may be unconscious, and from which they are seldom free.

"But, Mr. Sumner," said Mr. Macready, "the thing doesn't admit of a-a-argument. Mr. Papanti,

I have n-no doubt, is a very good person, but e-e-evidently his memory is not as good a-a-as his manners. *He* has made the mistake to which he alludes, and not I-I-I. The proposition was his; I accepted it, and have complied with the agreement literally. I shall not, under present circumstances, reconsider the matter. As long as I-I-I know I a-a-am right I shall consider Mr. Papanti wrong; and if he applies to you, why tell him, if you please, that my m-m-mind is made up—positively, positively, and therefore Mr. Papanti will a-a-act as he pleases; but I must say his present m-m-method does not please me. Pray excuse my positiveness, but plain talk saves time." *

As nearly as I can remember such were Mr. Macready's words, and as nearly as I can here reproduce a very strong impression such was his manner of speaking. In connection with this subject I will mention an incident showing something of the tragedian's method at rehearsal.

The play was *Macbeth.* An actor slow of speech and dull of comprehension was to deliver the lines of the terrified messenger who announces the supernatural coming of Birnam Wood. Being particularly anxious to execute the directions given to him—as justice compels me to acknowledge is generally the case with subordinate performers—he listened attentively to the preparatory remarks by which the tragedian endeavored to inform him

* The hesitating articulative utterance of the initial vowel of some of the words indicated by a repetition in smaller type is in reality more like a slight muttering of the letter *u* as heard in *up* than the sound of any other letter.

how very important it was to him (Macbeth) to have the news properly enunciated. This statement, made in the measured tones of Mr. Macready, was quite sufficient to render the man nervous, and he began in faltering accents—entirely natural to him at least, considering his situation and the state of his mind—

> "As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
> I looked towards Birnam, and anon
> Methought the wood began to move."

To which Macbeth replied—

> "Liar and slave!"

Falling on his knees, the messenger continued, in a still greater perturbation of manner—

> "Let me endure your wrath if it be not true.
> Within these three miles you may see it a-coming."

"No, no, no," replied the disgusted tragedian; "that won't do, sir—a-coming won't do. Try it again, sir, and don't say a-coming."

Again the messenger essayed his task.

> "Within these three miles you may see it——a-coming."

Mr. Macready: "Good Heavens, sir! have you no ears? You are not speaking common language; it is *blank verse*, sir, and a single misplaced syllable destroys the metre. Now, sir, you say 'a-coming;' don't you perceive that the *a* is a gratuitous sound? You know how to

spell *coming*, which begins with a *c*—no preceding sound of *a;* therefore you should say,

'Within these three miles you may see it a-a-coming.'"

Once more the now bewildered actor began, but in a still less confident manner than before, feeling that the difficulty was growing, if possible, more complicated, the reference to that terrible "blank verse" being to his mind as unintelligible as Greek.

"Go on, sir, if you please," said Mr. Macready.

"Within these three miles you may see it—may see it—it—"

And, in spite of all his desire to avoid the rock ahead, the objectionable *a* asserted the power of habit, and "a-coming" bolted out with frightful distinctness.

Turning to the stage-manager, who was trying to keep his countenance, the discomfited tragedian exclaimed in despair, "He cannot do it, sir; he would if he could, but he cannot."

To which the mortified messenger, in justification of his failure, replied, "Mr. Macready, I don't see the difference between my way of doing it and yours, unless it is that I put only one *a* before 'coming,' and you put half a dozen little ones."

This was virtually the fact: the one *a* of the actor was the result of a vulgar habit, while the stammering hesitation of the tragedian was a bad habit, though not a vulgar one.

I am here reminded also of a somewhat similar occurrence which was publicly exhibited on the Boston stage, and with a much more tragic result.

On Mr. Macready's last visit to this country the regular managers had refused to give him the usual star terms; in consequence of which an "outside manager" engaged him, and converted one of the large halls into a theatre as a speculation. The result was, that while Mr. Macready made money the admirers of the drama, though satisfied with his finished and beautiful performances, had reason to complain of the insufficiency of the subordinate elements employed in his support. As Miss Cushman, however, performed the leading female character, there was no room for dissatisfaction with that part of the entertainment, although she had not then attained the full height of her popularity. The play upon this occasion also was *Macbeth*, and, notwithstanding sundry general deficiencies, nothing especial occurred to mar the admirable performances of Macbeth and his consort until the fifth act, when matters culminated.

The usurping thane, lashed by despair into a state of fury—asserting his defiance and scorn for the avenging powers that were beleaguering his castle—is suddenly confronted by the trembling bearer of ill-omened news, and stands defiantly awaiting the doom of fate. "My lord—my lord—" began the hesitating and breathless actor, who, being a novice, was more frightened than the

messenger himself could have been, especially as he had no doubt undergone the usual verbal castigation of the morning rehearsal—"My lord—my lord—" said the messenger; then a pause.

"Go on, sir—go on, sir," came in suppressed tones from the tragedian. "Go on, sir."

> "My lord, as I did stand my watch upon the hill,
> I looked—I looked—"

"Well, sir—well, sir? What then? what then? Go on, go on, sir!" said Mr. Macready in a fierce, husky whisper.

The audience now began to titter, and the bewildered actor made a desperate effort, and started afresh:

> "As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
> I looked toward Birnam, and anon—anon—"

But here, alas! nerve failed as well as memory, and, though the prompter's voice was ringing in his ears, the words stuck in his throat and would not out.

Mr. Macready, who had been working himself up for the great point of the scene, at last broke out with the text, "Liar and slave!" at the same time striking with his truncheon at the messenger, who fell upon his knees, wildly shrieking, "As I did stand my watch upon the hill—" But the audience was now in a roar and Mr. Macready in a rage.

"Get off, sir! get off!" hissed from between the tragedian's set teeth as he rushed up the stage in

a white heat of fury, while the messenger, choking with fright, sprang to his feet and bolted off as if shot from a cannon, amid shouts of laughter from the audience, now as completely demoralized as the tragedian himself.

This incident shows something of the nervous and irritable nature of Mr. Macready, and how while performing he became subject to a personality of feeling rather than absorbed in that broad and comprehensive abstraction or ideal fervor through which, in a certain sense, self becomes merged in enthusiastic fellowship with the language of the drama.

Had such an accident occurred to the elder Booth, he would have covered up the "effect defective," and saved the man from disgrace and himself from mortification by one of those improvised efforts in stage-business for which he was so famous.

John Taylor, a London editor and critic of celebrity,* wrote: "I was at first so little an admirer of John Kemble's performance of Hamlet that, considering it stiff, conceited, and unnatural, I wrote four epigrams in ironical commendation of it, and inserted them together in a public print which I then conducted. The late Mr. Francis Twiss, who took a strong interest in the welfare of Mr. Kemble, introduced me to him in the lobby of Drury Lane Theatre. I had just before seen

* John Taylor was the author of the old-time ballad of "Monsieur Tonson Come again." Planche founded his amusing farce of that name on the poem.

him point Kemble's notice to me, and heard him whisper the word 'epigrams.' I was therefore not prepared for the unaffected civility with which he addressed me. We immediately fell into conversation, and I remember that Mr. Kemble very soon began a defence of declamation, stating it as originally constituting one of the chief features of theatrical excellence on the Grecian stage.

"Mr. Kemble's classical and general knowledge and the courtesy of his manners, as well as his improving theatrical powers, procured him high and extensive connections. He kept a hospitable and elegant table, without display. He was fond of Dryden, and sometimes read to me passages from that admirable poet. I do not think he was a good reader, for he generally read in a tone either too low or too high. There is obviously but one tone in reading or acting that excites the sympathy of the hearer, and that is the tone which feeling suggests and expresses; and such was the charm of Garrick, which rendered his acting in tragedy or comedy impressive in the highest degree. Kemble, with all his professional judgment, skill, and experience, like all other mortals, was sometimes induced to mistake the natural direction of his powers, and to suppose that he was as much patronized by the Comic as by the Tragic Muse. When I called on him one morning he was sitting in his great chair with his night-cap on, and, as he told me, cased in flannel. Immediately after the customary salutation he said, 'Taylor, I am studying a new part in a popular comedy, and

I should like to know your opinion as to the manner in which I am likely to perform it.'—'As you tell me it is a comic part,' said I, 'I presume it is what you style "intellectual comedy," such as the chief characters in Congreve, Wycherley, and Vanbrugh.'—'What do you think,' said he, "of Charles in *The School for Scandal?*'—'Why,' said I, 'Charles is a gay, free-spirited, convivial fellow.' —'Yes,' said he, 'but Charles is a gentleman.' He tried the part, but his gayety did not seem to the town to be of the right flavor."

Mr. Reynolds, the author of a score of lively comedies justly popular on the English stage within the early part of the present century, writing of John P. Kemble, says: "In several characters—particularly in those of *The Roman* and *The Misanthrope*—he was unquestionably the finest actor I ever saw, and off the stage his unaffected simplicity of manner rendered him most pleasing and entertaining. One instance of this simplicity I well remember. Meeting him at a dinner in the city not long after he had performed Charles in *The School for Scandal*, when our flattering host, asserting that this character had been lost to the stage since the days of Smith, added that Kemble's performance of it should be considered as 'Charles's Restoration.' To this a less complimentary guest replied, in an under tone, evidently intending not to be heard by the subject of his remark, that in his opinion this performance should rather be considered as 'Charles's Martyrdom.' Our witty critic, however, did not

speak so low but that the great tragedian heard him, when, to our surprise and amusement, instead of manifesting indignation and making a scene, he smiled and said, 'Well, now, that gentleman is not altogether singular in his opinion, as, if you will give me leave, I will prove to you. A few months ago, having unfortunately taken what is usually called a glass too much, on my return late at night I inadvertently quarrelled with a gentleman in the street. This gentleman very properly called on me the following morning for an explanation of what was certainly more accidental than intentional. "Sir," said I, "when I commit an error I am always ready to atone for it, and if you will only name any reasonable reparation in my power, I—"' "Sir," interrupted the gentleman, "at once I meet your proposal, and name one. Solemnly promise me, in the presence of this my friend, that you will never play Charles Surface again, and I am perfectly satisfied."—Well, I did promise, not from nervosity, as you may suppose, gentlemen, but because, though Sheridan was pleased to say that he liked me in the part, I certainly did not like myself in it—no, no more than that gentleman who has just done me the favor to call it "Charles's Martyrdom."'

"Kemble on many previous occasions having publicly proved his courage, I need not add that we were all convinced that on this occasion he was only actuated by good taste and good nature."

CHAPTER VI.

SHAKESPEARE AND DRAMATIC ART—MACREADY'S WERNER.

READERS and actors are generally too much given to an idea that where a character is placed in a position to require a change of dress or of voice in order to disguise its personality, it becomes necessary for the impersonator to make the deception so complete—that is, so natural, as it is termed—that the mask assumed may not be penetrated by those whom it was intended to deceive.

Now, where such transformations are introduced in the action of a play it must be remembered that they are meant to impose only on the personages of the scene. As far as deception goes, the actors and auditors are in the author's secret, and consequently they accept the disguise as a part of the play, and thus it may be said to pass current with them as theatrical coin.

The character of Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* we will cite as illustrating our meaning. Besides assuming the costume of a doctor of laws, suppose the actress should think it advisable, in order to make the disguise complete in the sense we have spoken of, to adopt a moustache, together

with the masculine voice and professional tone of a veritable advocate, in order to make good her legal pretensions to the court. Under such circumstances would not the impersonator of Portia, by attempting to put on a masculine manner and tone of voice, destroy in the minds of her hearers all the tender interest which arises from the sweet womanly tones of Portia's pleadings, so necessary for the proper realization of that touching appeal for mercy by which Shakespeare's heroine sought to soften the rigor of the Jew's stern plea for justice? Are those beautiful effects in the ideal forms of dramatic representation to be impaired—nay, destroyed—by the chilling hand of precision, introducing some gratuitous reality in order to prevent the possible misapprehension on the part of the audience of some imaginary effect only intended by the author to be seen through the medium of the mind's eye?

But Shakespeare himself has made all such precautionary "appliances and means to boot" of no avail by ushering Portia into the court with his magic wand, thus compelling the spectator to realize in the person of the actress a real advocate who knew the law and could construe it faithfully, notwithstanding the womanly voice and imperfections of mere legal trappings.

Portia is thus made a proper representative of law. Therefore, the actress is not only allowed, but expected, to employ her own peculiar feminine vocality in her pleading, while she is at liberty to adopt as much or as little as likes her best of mas-

culine firmness and depth of tone that a female voice may assume without making it harsh to her hearers. Shakespeare's *As You Like It* was performed for more than half a century with young men acting Rosalind and Celia: from this we may suppose that the male performers had to change the tones of their voices in order to give effect to the feminine graces of the characters they assumed. When Rosalind put on her male attire the actor no doubt resumed his natural tones, but this must have been in a modified form, so that he might present in some degree at least the feminine delicacy and tenderness of Rosalind. Unless this had been the case, the audience might have been unfavorably impressed by a too strongly-colored personation of the young forester. Now, as to the Rosalind of to-day, just in proportion as she might succeed in imposing a certain masculine dash of manner upon the auditor as befitting her doublet and hose, she would run the risk of presenting the features "of a very forward March chick of the male kind"—a poor substitute indeed for the picture of a brilliant and sensitive female who from necessity had been compelled to assume the male costume.

In fine, Rosalind, by putting on a too knowing manner of manhood, must as a consequence throw into shade those feminine traits of speech peculiar to an artless girlish character, while the delicacy and grace of action inseparable from womanly taste and cultivation would, by the obtrusion of a marked masculine manner, be sacrificed

to flippancy of gesture and pertness of expression.

A just and critical application of that principle which Hamlet termed "discretion" to our studies of dramatic character and situation must lead us to perceive that it is the poet's art which makes us accept as naturally efficient the disguises assumed by Portia and Rosalind and numerous others in the same line of dramatic action; and we are content to be deceived by the maskers in consideration of the pleasure we enjoy in realizing the deception. Therefore, it must be conceded that all overstrained and far-fetched attempts on the part of impersonators to reconcile and make plain cause and effect in dramatic situations must result in defeating the very object the dramatist has in view; which is to create in the mind of his auditors an impression of naturalness in order that his language, through the medium of their excited imaginations, may people his mimic world with living, thinking, and acting beings.

Shakespeare's dramas show how little comparatively their author relied on mere physical or mechanical action for effects. His main dependence was on his language, on his ability to enthuse each form with the life and soul of his glorious imagery, his sparkling fancy, and all the unbounded wealth of his expressive power. With such forces, guided by his all-seeing observation, which scanned alike the simple and the complex of all Nature's works, animate or inanimate, the mighty maker of the English drama was able to depict humanity in

every condition of mind, soul, and body. It is only from such a comprehensive view of Nature in art that the Shakespearian student can hope to acquire the ability to give fitting expression to the thoughts and passions which agitate the human soul, and should be reflected in the mirror held up to Nature by the stage and the platform.

The only way by which the reader or actor can reach the sympathies and affections of the human heart is through the magnetic power of the voice. When that delicate organism, which produces the broad effects and nice distinctions in kind and degree of expressive vocality, is subjected to true feeling, good taste, and judgment, then may Shakespeare's creations be transformed from the dead letter of the printed page to that stage of action where they first drew breath and looked and moved as living things.

MACREADY.

I propose to show that the tragedian's art in Mr. Macready's case was so elaborate and æsthetic that it asserted its perfections to the auditor as fully as it claimed his delight and admiration for the beauties of its execution. In other words, Macready's art exhibited the art too fully.

Who is not conscious of the fact that lasting impressions are made upon the heart and brain, which, though stamped with sufficient force for retention, become obscured by time, only remembered, it may be, in our dreams, and sometimes flashed into recollection by sudden and accidental

associations, but always lingering round the heart, subject to the power of a kindred spirit in Nature's realms of form, color, and sound to conjure them into life again? Such sympathies of the soul are often wrought upon and excited by the voice and spirit of the actor in the utterance of the author's language, as well as by its sentiment; and when the chord is struck whose vibrations reproduce such intermingling memories, the auditor feels and acknowledges a power coexistent with the voice of Nature—a subtle power defying the ability of tongue or pen to describe its charms.

Fortunate and happy must the orator or actor be who from intent and purpose or accidental cause possesses the ability to strike such chords in the human heart and draw his audience to him by such natural affinities. As a well-painted picture, harmonious in its details, well executed in perspective, perfect in light and shade, and striking in its objective point of sight, natural in tone and color, appropriately framed and artistically hung, fills the eye of the beholder with pleasure, so was Macready's Hamlet an object of infinite delight to the auditor. It was almost universally considered the masterpiece of England's most artistic and intellectual tragedian. Yet in a dramatic sense, from the standpoint of natural effect, it was merely a picture of the melancholy and still intensely impassioned child of sorrow and affliction. We mean that it was such a picture that one might stand before it entranced in a generalism of human sympathies, and yet it lacked any

strongly individual or central point of affinity. How often do we hear the remark, "That is a beautiful or highly-finished picture of such or such a one," or, "That is a speaking likeness of my friend; he talks to me from the canvas, and yet I confess it might be more artistically executed in detail"!

Such a distinction between the merits of performers equally distinguished for dramatic excellence may serve to point the difference of impression made upon auditors of equal discernment and cultivation in the delineative effects of the stage, the one preferring the simple and natural speaking likeness, while the other accepts the high art of the elaborated portrait of human nature.

Mr. Macready, we have been told by the late Professor William Russell, who was his townsman, possessed in his youth a voice of great clearness, compass, and beauty. He was distinguished by a fine manly bearing, and was unaffected in his style of speech and ardent and impulsive in his disposition. His declamation at school was marked by poetic fervor and exquisite taste, while his voice showed good training and perfect obedience to command. Direct from college, he entered upon his dramatic course with all the accomplishments which mark the scholar and the gentleman.

The history of his professional career as a young man in London is only a repetition of the old story of an artist's struggles between necessity and choice—on the one hand love of art and

devotion to its principles; on the other, love of praise and money and neglect of the interests of true art.

His performances, though eliciting the admiration of the intelligent and critical, and giving satisfaction to the public as those of a rising and promising actor, yet failed from lack of managerial influence to meet with popular success; therefore he did not pass as current coin in the market of dramatic values. In fine, his performances lacked the so-termed startling originality of effect which in theatrical parlance brings an audience to their feet and makes them hoarse with approving shouts.

Disappointed in his hopes, and thinking he might have made a mistake in depending too much on his elocutionary and poetic ideas of stage delivery and action, he took a resurvey of the situation, and compared his acting with that of other tragedians who were more successful in securing the sterling stamp of the profession. Accepting in due time the idea so prevalent among professional people that what is popular must be perfect, he remodelled his style, adopting by degrees, though it may be without intending imitation, some of the peculiarly expressive traits of certain distinguished performers then masters of the situation in London.

In consequence of this change of base, his acting became more theatrical or stagey. His fervor and impulse were not in the least abated, and, still influenced by taste and good judgment—

which it was not in his nature to lose sight of—his efforts were produced more in conformity with the fashion of the times, and at the dictation of the critics were at last pronounced brilliant manifestations of theatrical genius.

Thus he established a reputation of increased pecuniary worth, and finally became the embodiment of what was termed the perfection of artistic skill in his profession. From this period of his history it was observable to Mr. Macready's true admirers that, though his acting was marked by some of the best points of his predecessors and contemporaries in respect to force and vividness, yet it was plain that the refining influence of precision and polish in minute details had in some sense deadened the native fire and breadth of his poetic temperament, and thereby impaired his natural powers.

One peculiar effect of this new style was that, while conveying an impression of its grace and elegance, it produced a feeling that the actor was anxious to give such an illustration of the author's meaning as would supply any possible lack of proper understanding on the part of the auditor, such a want of appreciation concerning the text being clearly indicated by the actor's studied manner of striving to give a correctly emphasized interpretation of what he might deem ambiguous or obscure.

This peculiar idea of making the way plain to those who are supposed to be in the dark concerning the true significance of an author's lite-

ral meaning is exemplified by editors of dramatic works, who make expository notes to passages so plain to ordinary intelligence as to render any explanation superfluous. The same thing is true of the habits of certain writers, who underscore their words with bewildering uniformity, no matter how obvious their import may be. A good hit at this extra help gratuitously rendered to inexperienced readers and hearers is made in a travesty of the play of *Hamlet*. When the Prince rudely assaults Laertes in his sister's grave the Queen apologizes for her son's madness, and concludes with the following jingle:

> Anon he's furious as an angry Towzer,
> And then as patient as a hungry mouser.

Explanatory of this mysterious matter there follows a foot-note by the editor, who informs the reader that, having looked into the authorities regarding the word *Towzer*, though rather puzzled by the many suggestions so kindly offered to unriddle the mystery, he is inclined to the opinion, but expresses it cautiously, that by a word so strange and unfamiliar in its aspect the author possibly meant a *watch-dog*.

I have before referred to the fact that in Mr. Macready's early life he had depended more upon the tones of natural vocality than upon the artificialities of an affected intonation. But his voice finally lost its clear ring and other attractive qualities of tone, and became harsh, and even, at times, repulsive; this, in addition to the strongly-marked

peculiarity of his speech, became as much the nature of the actor as if it had been born with him. In one performance, however, the tragedian seemed to become so entirely absorbed in the character he was representing that this objectionable feature was not observable. I refer to his impersonation of the remarkable character of Werner in Byron's play of that name. Here the vocal peculiarities of the actor seemed so entirely appropriate that one might fancy that Werner talked as Mr. Macready did.

This poetic drama is strongly marked with domestic traits, which impose upon the spectator the fascinations of a familiar yet profound mystery. It has no advantage of display in scenery, no mere stage-effects, no pageantry of the battlefield or dazzling presence of regal splendor. Unaided or unaffected by any such adjuncts, the actor has to depend entirely upon himself for the materials by which to give color to the emotions and passions so ably portrayed by the author.

No man who ever saw Macready as Werner could fail to accept the performance as the perfection of natural acting untrammelled by the obtrusion of affected art. In witnessing the moody mental tortures of the sore-tried and desperate nobleman the auditor was made, through a conscious feeling of respect due to an over-sensitive nature, to shrink from too close a scrutiny of the scene before him, and, instead of considering his presence as a spectator a purchased privilege, he regarded himself almost as an intruder upon the

privacy of a man who was unable to withdraw his sorrows from the public gaze. Such an impression, arising from the consummate skill of the actor, transformed the auditor into an entranced observer of the enactment of a terrible domestic scene, rather than the public representation of a play.

Under such influences, it may be said, Macready swayed the feelings of his audience, until from the stage-surroundings Werner stood out in natural lineaments, a human being bowed down by an insupportable affliction and claiming the respect and sympathy of his fellow-creatures. How entirely did the auditors become engrossed with the settled misanthropy of a despairing mind, the concentrated bitterness of an outraged nature struggling against the overmastering force of an apparently inexorable destiny! When the developments of the plot bring his proud boy face to face with an accusing witness to answer the fearful charge of homicide, the miseries of the wretched parent were so faithfully portrayed that the spasmodic twitchings of the face, the heaving of the breast, and the excited tremulous tones of fear and anxiety all seemed to be the expressions of realized agony. But who shall attempt to portray the wailing tones of the crushed heart that thrilled through the nerves of the auditor when the bold and defiant avowal of his child revealed him to the horror-stricken father as a cold-blooded murderer? No tongue can fittingly describe such a scene.

In addition to the thorough discipline to which

his vocal effects were submitted, Mr. Macready's minutiæ of details in what is termed stage-business were always premeditated and carefully and repeatedly practised before they were trusted to a public trial. The rehearsals of his plays (where the companies were of the standard order) afforded to those who could appreciate their artistic excellence a study of the histrionic art unique and invaluable to the profession.

One night, just before making his entrance on the first scene of *Richelieu*, the tragedian stopped and took hold of the protruding edge of a scene and began to practise his stage-cough—in a dry, husky way at first, and gradually increasing until it reached a suffocating kind of guttural spasm resembling somewhat a fit of whooping-cough in a child. Just as the climax of this cough was reached a stage-carpenter, who never had been present at a rehearsal, thinking, as he said, that Mr. Macready was choking, unexpectedly exclaimed, "Mr. Macready, sir! sir!" accompanying the words with two or three sharp slaps on the back. With a scream the tragedian, now choking with anger, turned on the man, but before he could speak or the carpenter could offer an explanation the call-boy, pulling the sleeve of the cardinal's dress, cried out, "Stage waiting, Mr. Macready—stage waiting, sir." Then, slowly putting one hand behind his back and the other on the shoulder of the monk Joseph, Richelieu began his measured walk toward the stage-entrance, uttering all the while, in half-coughing and half-growl-

ing tones, denunciations on the carpenter in return for the compliment he had paid him in taking his professional cough for a real one. Some time, of course, elapsed before he reached the side-door. The audience were waiting, but the artist could not hurry on that account; he coughed and tottered so well, however, when he got on the stage, that more than usual applause greeted his appearance.

Mr. Macready was fond of telling the following story as his experience of American independence, exemplified in a Western actor of the self-satisfied kind. "In the last act of *Hamlet*," said he, "I was very anxious to have the King, who was rather of a democratic turn of mind, to fall, when I stabbed him, over the steps of the throne and on the right-hand side, with his feet to the left, in order that when I was to fall I should have the centre of the stage to myself as befitting the principal personage of the tragedy. No objection was made to this request on the part of the actor, but at night, to my great surprise, he wheeled directly round after receiving the sword-thrust and deliberately fell in the middle of the scene, just on the spot where I was in the habit of dying. Well, as a dead man cannot move himself, and as there was no time for others to do it, the King's body remained in possession of my place, and I was forced to find another situation, which I did, and finished the scene in the best way I could. When I expostulated with His Majesty for the liberty he had taken, he coolly replied, 'Mr. Macready, we

Western people know nothing about kings, except that they have an odd trick of doing as they please; therefore I thought, as I was a king, I had a right to die wherever I —— pleased; and so, sir, I fell back upon my kingly rights, from which, you perceive, sir, there is no appeal.' I retired," said Mr. Macready, "to my dressing-room to have a hearty laugh over what I had felt more like crying over a moment before."

AN UNREHEARSED STAGE-EFFECT.

While yet a mere youth I was acting in the old city of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, during the vacation of the regular theatrical season, with a portion of the company attached to the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia. Miss Eliza Riddle, one of the most beautiful and accomplished actresses of the American stage, and a great favorite in Philadelphia, was the leading lady of the "star combination," as it is generally termed in provincial towns.

Miss Riddle, was afterward a popular star-actress in the principal theatres of the South and West. She became the wife of Mr. Joseph M. Field, the eccentric comedian and the witty editor of one of the popular papers of St. Louis. Their only child is our talented young countrywoman, Miss Kate Field.

That my readers may realize the situation of affairs in connection with the incident to be related, I will state that the building in which we were acting was originally a barn, and had been

fitted up, as the playbills say, "regardless of expense" to answer the purposes of a theatre. The rear stone wall, which formed the back part of the stage, still retained the large double folding doors of the barn, while the yard at the rear, with its sheds, was used for the accommodation of the proprietor's cows. The double doors were made available for scenic purposes when shut, having a rude landscape scene painted on the boards, and when they were open they afforded the means of increasing the size of the stage, which was done by laying down a temporary floor on the outside directly opposite the opening, a wooden framework, covered with painted canvas, forming the sides, back, and top of the extension. The play was *Romeo and Juliet*, Miss Riddle performing the part of Juliet, and I that of Romeo.

The extra staging described had been set up in the barnyard and enclosed by the canvas walls, and thus room was obtained for the "Tomb of the Capulets." The front part of the tomb was formed of a set piece, so called, painted to represent the marble of the sepulchre, in which were hung the doors forming its entrance, and at the top was painted in large letters "The Tomb of the Capulets." Within the tomb, and against the canvas which formed the rear wall, was a small wooden platform, on which was placed a compact mass of hay, shaped like a pallet and nicely covered with black muslin, and on this hay-stuffed couch was to rest the body of the dead or drug-surfeited Lady Juliet.

In view of the gloomy surroundings of the tomb, and particularly of its close proximity to the barnyard, it would not be considered, under any circumstances, a pleasant resting-place for a young lady, especially of an imaginative turn of mind. Before the rising of the curtain on the fifth act, however, I had carefully inspected the premises and looked after the proper disposal of Juliet in the tomb, so that when the doors were to be thrown open in sight of the audience there might be no obstacle to the full view of the sepulchred heroine.

Everything was pronounced in a state of readiness, and, receiving from Miss Riddle an earnest request to hurry on the scene which precedes the catastrophe of the tragedy, I left her, her last words being, "Oh do hurry, Mr. Murdoch! I'm so dreadfully afraid of rats!"

The curtain rose. Romeo received the news of the death of his Juliet, in despair provided the fatal poison, and rushed to the graveyard. Here he met and despatched his rival, the county Paris, burst open the doors of the tomb, and there, in the dim, mysterious light, lay Juliet. The frantic lover rushed to her side, exclaiming—

> Oh my love! my wife!
> Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,
> Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:
> Thou art not conquered; beauty's ensign yet
> Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
> And death's pale flag is not advanced there.
>
> * * * * *

Ah, dear Juliet,
Why art thou yet so fair?

Here, observing strange twitchings in the face and hands of the lady, I stooped during my last line to ask her in a stage-whisper what was the matter; to which she sobbingly replied, "Oh, take me out of this! oh take me out of this, or I shall die!"

Feeling assured of the necessity of the case, and wishing to bring the scene to a close, I seized upon the poison and exclaimed—

Come, bitter conduct, come, unsavory guide!
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
The dashing rocks, thy seasick weary bark!

Smothered sobbings and suppressed mutterings of "Oh, Mr. Murdoch, take me out! you must take me out!" came from the couch. Now fully alarmed, I swallowed the poison, exclaiming—

Here's to my love!

Then, throwing away the vial and with my back to the tomb, I struck an attitude, as usual, and waited for the expected applause, when I was startled by a piercing shriek, and, turning, I beheld my lady-love sitting up wringing her hands and fearfully *alive*. I rushed forward, seized and bore her to the footlights, and was received with shouts of applause. No one had noticed the by-play of the tomb, nor did the dying scene lose any of its effects, for Juliet was excited and hys-

terical and Romeo in a state of frantic bewilderment. The curtain fell amid every manifestation of delight on the part of the audience.

And now for the scene behind the curtain. All the dead-alive Juliet could gasp out was, "Oh, oh, the bed! the bed! Oh, oh, the rats! the rats!' I ran up the stage, tore open the pallet, and there—oh, horrors!—sticking through the canvas walls of the tomb, were the horns and head of a cow. Though the intruder had smelt no rats, she had in some mysterious way scented the fodder, and after pushing her nose through an unfortunate rent in the canvas proceeded to make her supper off the hay which formed the couch of the terrified Juliet.

CHAPTER VII.

EDMUND KEAN AND HIS CRITICS.—HIS SON CHARLES AN IMITATOR.

EDMUND KEAN, as a country actor fearless of criticism, regarded the stage merely as a platform upon which to exhibit the powers of an impetuous nature that required fitting opportunity of audible expression to give vent to its turbulent emotions, which, unuttered, prey upon themselves. Scorning all restrictive rules or professional formulas except those which he found within his own practical experiences, he rather dashed at than studied his profession. Applauded and flattered at the onset by rustic and unlettered audiences, whose judgment came more from their feelings than their knowledge, he found himself, without premeditation, in heartfelt sympathy with his subject and his audience. Thus developed and disciplined, his highly-wrought forms of expression became a second nature, till, under the lash and spur of irresistible passion, he finally believed himself to be the character he nightly assumed.

In view of such a professional experience we are prepared to accept the advent of Kean upon the English stage as a triumph of natural power

accompanied by a preparatory discipline—not founded, however, upon the refinements and elegances of art or influenced by the merely formal dictation of a prevailing school.

As the strongly-marked character of the style of David Garrick supplied what we may term a background of contrast to that of John Philip Kemble, so did Kemble's stately mannerism of voice and bearing furnish "a like foil to set it off" for that of Kean.

Kean flashed upon the English stage, it might be said, like a meteor. The patrons of the drama had become apathetic in their feelings, while their tastes were toned down to the sombre coloring of sobriety and dignity which was the prevailing style, at least among the gentlemen of the stage. The sudden and unheralded introduction of an intensely vital element aroused their perceptions and quickened their slumbering dramatic interest.

It is said that when Kean appeared in London, Kemble (who was present at his first performance of Shylock), in answer to a query regarding his opinion of the new actor, replied, "The little man is terribly in earnest." This rousing earnestness was the keynote to the little man's success, for he made the audience as much in earnest as he was himself.

Without attempting to trace any likeness between the entirely opposite characters of the poet Byron and the actor Kean, we may venture to suggest a resemblance apparent in certain traits of their respective styles of dealing with language

—the one in the written, the other in its spoken, form. It may be observed, by all who notice the modes by which intensified passion expresses itself in real life, that when the feelings are wrought up to a state of frenzy mere words lose their power, and cries, shrieks, and screams usurp their place, or when shocked by sudden and stupefying horror words are swallowed up and passion is choked down into silence. Shakespeare furnishes us with illustrations in the characters of Lear and Macduff. When the old and outraged king awakes to a realizing sense of the cruel and unnatural treatment of his daughters, the hot lava of wrath struggling for vent in his exasperated breast, he exclaims in bewildered frenzy—

> You heavens give me that patience, patience I need!
> You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
> As full of grief as age; wretched in both!
> If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts
> Against their father, fool me not so much
> To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,
> And let not women's weapons, water-drops,
> Stain my man's cheeks!—No, you unnatural hags,
> I will have such revenges on you both,
> That all the world shall— I will do such things,—
> What they are, yet I know not; but they shall be
> The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep;
> No, I'll not weep:
> I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
> Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
> Or ere I'll weep: O fool, I shall go mad!"

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Here it will be perceived that connected expression fails, while the tempest rages on in wild

and whirling words. And on the other hand, Macduff in receiving the news of the murder of his wife and children, stands as if petrified in mute despair. Malcolm, filled with awe at the speechless misery of his friend, strives to break the fetters of his tongue and rouse him to action. Striking him on the shoulder with sudden energy, he exclaims—

> What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;
> Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak
> Whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break.

Byron in *Childe Harold* gives us an exemplification of a different state of the mind, though of a kindred nature. Subdued at first, the poet's passionate emotion suddenly breaks from the restraint which had confined it, and finally threatens, as Shakespeare has said, to make the "heart too great for what contains it." Gathering together all the elements of passion, the poet hurls forth in a flood of vehement utterance the feelings which smoulder in his breast, "wreaking his thoughts upon expression." After describing a storm on Lake Leman and the adjacent mountains, he likens the flashing bolts and scorching shafts of the elemental strife to the blighting rage of love and hate in the human soul, and goes on to express the intensified depths of his own passion-seared nature. But the poet fails to paint the state of the soul for lack of fitting words, while moody silence triumphs over the mental struggle:

Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, lightnings! ye!
With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a soul
To make these felt and feeling, well may be
Things that have made me watchful; the far roll
Of your departing voices is the knoll
Of what in me is sleepless—if I rest.
But where of ye, O tempests, is the goal?
Are ye like those within the human breast?
Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some high nest?

Could I embody and unbosom now,
That which is most within me, could I wreak
My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak,
All that I would have sought, and all I seek,
Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe, into one word,
And that one word were *lightning*, I would speak;
But as it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.

By the power expressed in these lines I am strongly reminded of the resemblance—to which I have before referred—between the poet Byron and the actor Kean.

John Taylor says: "Having given some account of the theatrical performers who have fallen within my notice, beginning with Mr. Garrick, it might reasonably be thought strange if I said nothing of so very conspicuous a character in the theatrical world as Mr. Kean. The truth is, that I never could perceive in him those high professional merits which the public have not only evidently, but most fervently, acknowledged. I was unwilling to oppose my humble opinion to the public judgment, and, as a public critic, I

deemed it cruelty to attack a man in his profession, even if I could possibly have persuaded myself that my weak censure might do him an injury. Such has been always my rule in writing theatrical critiques, either on performers or dramatic authors.

"I saw Mr. Kean on his first performance in London. The part was Shylock, and it appeared to me to be a favorable specimen of what might be expected from a provincial performer, but I could not see any of those striking merits which have since appeared to the public; and, finding in his progress that his fame increased without any apparent improvement in my humble judgment, and, as I before observed, reluctant to oppose public opinion, I avoided, as much as was consistent with the duty of a public journalist, to notice his performances. But I hope I shall not be accused of vanity in saying that I found my silence in public and my observations in private had brought upon me the imputation of being an enemy to Mr. Kean. I should be shocked indeed if I felt conscious that I deserved such an imputation. As a proof, however, that such a suspicion had gained ground, I dined once with my old acquaintance, Mr. Pascoe Grenfell, M. P., at his house in Spring Gardens, when Mr. and Mrs. Kean were of the party; and I heard afterward that Mrs. Kean—a lady by no means unwilling to communicate her sentiments—had expressed her surprise, either to Mr. Grenfell himself or to one of the company, that Mr. Taylor should be in-

vited to the same table with Mr. Kean. I happened to sit next to Mr. Kean at dinner, and paid him particular attention to obviate or soften any unpleasant feeling on his part, and endeavored to enter into conversation with him on dramatic subjects; but, though he conducted himself with politeness, he seemed of a reserved and taciturn habit, yet without the least indication that he thought himself near a person inimical to his fame. I have since seen Mr. Kean in most if not all of his theatrical exhibitions, and I can even solemnly declare that I went for the purpose of enlightening my mind by the public judgment; but, unfortunately, my opinion remained precisely the same. I say 'unfortunately,' for otherwise I should have received from his acting the same pleasure which the public have enjoyed.

"Perhaps it may be thought that I am biassed by my recollection of Garrick, whom I saw in many of his performances when I was twenty and twenty-one years of age. If so, I cannot but admit the charge, since I am supported by the testimony of the best authors and critics of his time, as well as by the opinion of all his theatrical contemporaries. Far from feeling a prejudice against Mr. Kean, I should have been happy in joining with the millions in admiration of his abilities, as he is the grandson of an old and long-esteemed friend of mine, Mr. George Saville Carey. And here let me stop to pay a tribute of respect to the memory of a very worthy man, and a man of real genius.

"George Saville Carey was the son of Henry Carey, a very popular dramatic author, but more particularly known for his fertility in song-writing. His 'Sally of our Alley' has been long a favorite ballad; he was the author of *Chrononhotonthologos* and other dramas popular at the time, and is mentioned in Dr. Johnson's *Life of Addison* as one of Addison's most intimate friends. His son, my old friend, labored to prove that his father was the author of the words and music of what has been styled the national anthem, 'God save great George our King!'

"Henry Carey was a musician as well as a dramatic writer, but being, like too many of the literary fraternity, improvident and careless of the future, he was reduced to despair, and hanged himself on the banister of the house where he resided. A single halfpenny was all that was found in his pocket, and it came into the possession of my father's old friend, Mr. Brooke, whom I have before mentioned, and who kept it as a mournful relic of departed friendship.

"George Saville Carey, I believe, had no recollection of his unfortunate father, though he cherished his memory and was well acquainted with his works. The son, it is said, was originally apprenticed to a printer, but he soon adopted the theatrical profession, with, however, so little success that he became a sort of public orator and mimic, in which capacity I became acquainted with him early in my life. He was chiefly a mimic of the theatrical performers of that time, but intro-

duced many odd characters in his miscellaneous compositions, which he publicly recited. I remember to have heard him deliver his recitations at Marylebone Gardens, now covered with elegant mansions. Like his father, he was a musical performer, and accompanied himself with skill and taste on the guitar.

"As the nature of his profession induced him to lead an itinerant life, I never knew when or where he died, but have reason to fear not in prosperous circumstances. He wrote many songs and other poetical productions, but as he kept them in reserve as instruments of his calling, I only know them as he recited them in public or to me when he called on me. I only knew of his death when his daughter—whom I understood to be the mother of Mr. Kean—called on me to sell some musical productions of her deceased father; and on more than one occasion that child accompanied her who was destined to become the most popular and attractive actor of his day.

"I have introduced these circumstances merely to show that I had more reason to be the friend of Mr. Kean than to be adverse to his talents.

"I will venture to say a few words respecting Mr. Kean as an actor. He had the sagacity to perceive that there were many points and passages in dramatic characters which performers in general passed negligently over in their endeavors to support the whole of the part, but which admitted of strong expression. These points and passages Mr. Kean seized upon, and brought forth some-

times with archness, and often with a fiery emotion which made a strong impression on the audience, and essentially contributed to his extraordinary success. That he performs with great energy must be readily admitted, and it is to be hoped that he will inoculate some of his professional brethren with the same fervor.

"Here I conclude my observations on Mr. Kean, heartily rejoicing at his prosperity, as he is the grandson of my old friend, and as he is well known to be a liberal-minded man, and ready to manifest a generous zeal to assist any of the theatrical community who fall into distress.

"It may be mentioned among the extraordinary vicissitudes of life that when the late Mr. John Kemble, in his almost idolatrous admiration of Shakespeare, during his management of Drury Lane Theatre, performed *Macbeth*, he introduced the children, according to a passage in the play, as spirits—

> Black spirits and white,
> Red spirits and gray,
> Mingle, mingle, mingle,
> You that mingle may.

Mr. Kean figured as one of those spirits, and was afterward destined to perform the royal usurper himself on those very boards and to draw popularity from that other great tragedian. Mr. Kemble did not consider that his own grave taste might on such an occasion differ from that of the majority of the audience, to whom the comic capering of the infantile band had a most ludi-

crous appearance, as, indeed, happened to be the case.

"At this time, Kean, being weak in his legs, was obliged to have them supported by iron props. My friend, George Colman the Younger, having seen the boy in this situation, and to whose ready wit and humor I, as well as most of his friends, have often been a victim, said, 'Oh, I remember the child, and I called his legs Fetter Lane sausages.'"

Doran says: "In Sir Giles Overreach all the qualities of Kean's voice came out to wonderful purpose, especially in the scene where Lovel asks him,

> Are you not moved with the sad imprecations
> And curses of whole families, made wretched
> By your sinister practices?

To which Sir Giles replies,

> Yes, as rocks are
> When foamy billows split themselves against
> Their flinty ribs; or as the moon is moved
> When wolves, with hunger pined, howl at her brightness.

I seem still to hear the words and the voice as I pen this passage—now composed, now grand as the foamy billows; so flute-like on the word *moon*, creating a scene with the sound; and anon sharp, harsh, fierce in the last line, with a look upward from those matchless eyes that rendered the troop visible, and their howl perceptible to the ear—the whole serenity of the man and the solidity of his temper being illustrated less by the assurance

in the succeeding words than by the exquisite music in the tone with which he uttered the word *brightness*."

Mr. Frederick Reynolds, the distinguished dramatic author, who was well informed on all theatrical matters, affords us the following hint regarding the pressure which was brought to bear upon the press in the case of a star who was to be a success in the interests of the Drury Lane management. Mr. Reynolds wrote in the capacity of an adherent of the opposite faction, Covent Garden:

"During the year 1814 there appeared in the theatrical hemisphere two *stars* of the first magnitude. 'Stars' do I call them? Suns, moons, comets, displaying coruscations, scintillations, illuminations, and halos hitherto unseen and unknown among the great heavenly bodies. Their names were Kean and O'Neill. The Shylock, Richard, and Hamlet of the former were all pronounced to be equally celestial; and one of the most grave idolaters of the latter demanded in print why the actor who played Romeo to the divine Juliet did not imbibe a portion of that angelic lady's ethereal fluid.

"During the height of this mania one of our young Westminster Hall orators, dining with Kean and Lord ——, told this histrionic phenomenon, among other compliments of a similar stamp, that he had never seen acting until the preceding evening.

"'Indeed!' said Kean. 'Why, you must have

seen others, sir, I should conceive, in Richard the Third?'

"'I have,' replied the barrister—'both Cooke and Kemble; but they must excuse me, Mr. Kean, if I should turn from them and frankly say to you, with Hamlet, "Here's metal more attractive."'

"Kean felt highly flattered, and begged to have the honor of drinking a glass of wine with his great legal admirer. The conversation then turning on a curious lawsuit that had been decided during the last western circuit (and which circuit our barrister at that time went), Kean, after a pause, inquired whether he had ever visited the Exeter Theatre.

"'Very rarely indeed,' was the reply; 'though, by the by, now I recollect during the last assizes I dropped in toward the conclusion of *Richard the Third.* Richmond was in the hands of a very promising young actor, but such a Richard!—such a harsh, croaking barn-brawler! I forget his name, but—'

"'I'll tell it you,' interrupted the Drury Lane hero, rising and tapping the great lawyer on the shoulder—'I'll tell it you: *Kean!*'

"This naturally created a loud laugh, in which, to his credit, Kean heartily joined, while the arch-critic turned it off by saying, 'How much and how rapidly you have improved!'

"During my long theatrical experience I have always observed that if the theatre be badly attended the play is deemed bad, the actors bad,

and the managers bad: 'all is out of joint.' The house being only half filled on the night of Kean's first appearance in Shylock, though some few present might have thought he gave, for a young man, rather a promising delineation of the character, it was certainly not considered by the majority of spectators by any means a very successful effort. However, on the following morning, being supported by that great engine the press (which, combined, could prove *me* at this present moment to be both young and handsome), up he mounted to celestial heights; and though so hoarse on the night of his second appearance that his voice could scarcely be heard beyond the orchestra, he made a hit in the battle (or rather boxing-match) with Richmond which secured to the old tragedy of *Richard the Third* at least sixty repetitions to crowded audiences.

"Sculptors, painters, and anatomists now immediately discovered that, to the grace of Antinöus and the dignity of Apollo, Kean added the beauty of Adonis; thus equalling, if not surpassing in exaggeration, those hyper-panegyrics which sixty years ago were even more prodigally lavished on that most popular hero, Wilkes, who at that time was so courted and admired that many people actually thought him a handsome man. A laughable instance of these opinions is recorded. In a conversation between two of his followers at Guildhall after two of the most effective speeches, one said to the other, 'Tom, what a fine, handsome fellow Master Wilkes is!'

"'Handsome!' rejoined Tom. 'Nay, not much of that, for he *squints* most horribly.'

"'Squints!' repeated the first speaker, examining Wilkes with much attention. 'Why, yes, to be sure he *squints* a little, but, confound you! not more than a *gentleman ought to do!*'"

COOPER AND KEAN.

One day, in a company of gentlemen (at his residence on the banks of the Delaware, Pennsylvania), where the merits of Mr. Kean's acting were being discussed, the tragedian Thomas Cooper suddenly exclaimed with great animation, "Othello! Othello! Why, gentlemen, Kean cannot come within a mile of Othello. His snarling, snappish speech and his gusty flights of vehement passion are all very striking and effective; but, gentlemen, they are directly opposite to the physical and intellectual forces of Othello. This is clearly indicated by the conscious deliberation and dignity of the language in which Shakespeare has presented the character. Mr. Kean is not susceptible of the full force of the mighty and tumultuous passions which stormed and seethed in the heart of the unhappy Moor, a man whose life-experiences were all in the camp or on the battle-field—a mode of life which teaches men, by the force of unyielding discipline, to control their passions. But let the curb once snap, and the dread gulf yawns for the victim of blind and ungovernable rage. I grant you Othello was impulsive, but it was the majestic passion of a roused

lion conscious of power. Shakespeare's words tell us what kind of passion inflamed the Moor and drove him to desperate action. There was no petulant snap in it or snarlish irritability; on the contrary, it was 'as broad and general as the casing air,' not bright and evanescent as the forked flash. Mark the tone of these lines, and see if you can find any resemblance in them to the quick excitements of frenzied vehemence, or, in short, anything to indicate littleness in mind or person:

OTHELLO.

Oh that the slave had forty thousand lives!
One is too poor, too weak, for my revenge.
Now do I see 'tis true. Look here, Iago;
All my fond love thus I do blow to heaven;
'Tis gone.
Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!
Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne
To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,
For 'tis of aspics' tongues!

* * * * *

IAGO.

Patience, I say; your mind, perhaps, may change.

OTHELLO.

Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont;
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable and wide revenge
Swallow them up. Now, by yond marble heaven,
In the due reverence of a sacred vow
I here engage my words.—*Othello*, Act III. Scene iii.

"John Kemble said of Kean's Othello, 'If the justness of its conception had been equal to the brilliancy of its execution, it would have been perfect. But the whole thing is a mistake, the fact being that the Moor was a slow man.'"

I remember something like the following, where Shakespeare is playing upon words:

> Not quickly moved to strike—
> I strike quickly being moved.

This may well be said of Othello in an apt but most terrible sense.

CHARLES KEAN.

Charles Kean was an imitator of his father's style of acting. But to the method which made the elder Kean famous the son added a grace and finish that gave repose and beauty to what would otherwise have been a mere copy, distinct in feature, but deficient in power. Of all our tragedians of the analytic and passionate order, approaching the mechanical in execution, Charles Kean may be said to have been the most finished, and yet the most earnest. He gave point to the precision of art, while he threw around his acting an artistic refinement the result of intuition and study. His attitudes were statuesque, his gestures flowing, vehement, and imposing. It might be said of his delineations, as Byron said of modern Greece,

> So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,
> We start, for soul is wanting there.

When we were very young actors I remember to have been struck with the consummate art with which he could husband resources by no means powerful, and produce effects at once startling and impressive. Upon reflection, I came to the conclusion that the son had caught the traditional method of the father by a disciplined control over the organs of speech in abrupt and rapid utterance, and the power to concentrate passion on special words and to hurl them forth with surprising force of expression, which carried his audience by storm. Thus the son was enabled to hold up the mantle of the father, although he might not be fitly said to wear it.

The occasion which first called my attention to young Kean's peculiar method was his acting of Posthumus in the play of *Cymbeline* at the Arch Street Theatre in Philadelphia about 1832. The character is one which requires quick perception and acute sensibility in conception and portraiture, the prominent traits being scepticism on the one hand, and obstinate adhesion to conviction on the other. Throughout the play Mr. Kean sustained his reputation for artistic excellence. There was nothing in the performance above or below the requirements of the language and situation until the last scene of the last act. Here the actor sprang, as it were, from his previous still-life with the most astounding abruptness of vehement fury I ever remember to have seen upon the stage. It was indeed art, but it was

the perfection of art; it was fiery passion and melting tenderness. In that one outburst I fully realized all that tradition had said of the father's power. Throughout the play the fire of emotion had been kept smouldering under restraint, in order that it might burst forth in one dazzling flash, to die out as suddenly as it had been kindled. Had such an exhibition of force been displayed in a character requiring a repetition of such effects, I question whether the actor would not have failed in attempting to meet such a demand.

I will endeavor to bring before the mental vision of my readers a bird's-eye view of the scene to which I have referred. In Act V. Scene v. of *Cymbeline*, Iachimo, the villain of the play, is called upon by Imogen to tell how he became possessed of the ring of her husband, who is supposed to be dead. While the repentant culprit tells his story of cold-blooded fraud Posthumus stands hidden behind the groups of courtiers and attendants, listening to that "which ran like poison through his blood." Iachimo, finishing the recital of his villainy, says, "Methinks I see him now." At this Kean suddenly darted from his concealment, and dashing down the stage struck his attitude and exclaimed, with a wild outburst of passion, sharp, harsh, and rattling in tone—

> Ay, so thou dost,
> Italian fiend!

As the instantaneous flash and bolt startle the beholder, so the actor seemed to electrify his

auditors; they broke out into the most determined and prolonged applause. Then came, in tones of mingled rage and remorse, the choking utterance of self-reproach:

> Ay me! most credulous fool,
> Egregious murderer, thief, anything
> That's due to all the villains past, in being,
> To come!

Here a sudden transition brought out the next lines in bold, ringing notes of adjuration:

> Oh give me cord, or knife, or poison,
> Some upright justicer!

Now the voice was changed to impetuous command, fierce and imperious denunciation, high, strong, and full-toned:

> Thou, king, send out
> For torturers ingenious; it is I
> That all the abhorred things o' the earth amend
> By being worse than they. I am Posthumus,
> That killed thy daughter:—villain-like, I lie;
> That caused a lesser villain than myself,
> A sacrilegious thief, to do 't.

This was followed by a mingling of the tearful tones of pity and pathetic admiration on the words—

> The temple
> Of virtue was she; yea, and she herself.

Choking sobs now gave way to vehement utterance and piercing tones that seemed to penetrate the brain with the wild notes of insanity:

> Spit, and throw stones, cast mire upon me, set
> The dogs o' the street to bay me; every villain
> Be called Posthumus Leonatus.

Here the climax of passion and fury culminated, while the words,

> And
> Be villainy less than 'twas,

formed a forcible cadence. Then, as if all the elements of indignant reproach and self-condemnation had spent themselves, the actor poured forth a flood of tenderness that seemed to upheave the very depths of his soul, exclaiming in an ecstasy of love and grief—

> O Imogen!
> My queen, my life, my wife! O Imogen,
> Imogen, Imogen!

From the wonderful effect of this lava-like flood of passion exhibited by the son I caught a glimpse of that power which, when a mere boy, listening to the elder Kean in Othello, overwhelmed me with a kind of bewildering idea that the little "black man" in the Moorish dress was acting like a lunatic and ought to be chained up.

MISS ELLEN TREE AND MACREADY.

Miss Ellen Tree (now Mrs. Charles Kean), one of the most finished and elegant actresses of her day and a highly-cultivated lady, told me this very characteristic story of Macready.

"I had been so often subjected to discomfort

in acting with Mr. Macready on account of his abandonment to the spirit of natural acting, as he termed it," said Miss Tree, "that I remonstrated, telling him that when I rushed into his protecting arms after the brutal assault in the streets of Rome by the client of Appius Claudius, he, as my father Virginius, clasped me to his breast with such a 'thump' that I involuntarily uttered a kind of 'ugh!' which made it appear to me quite ridiculous. And then again, I said, he spoiled the arrangement of my hair, which it always cost me an anxious hour with the hair-dresser to put in shape.

"He said, laughingly, 'You should be so glad to find yourself in the protecting arms of your father, instead of the rude grasp of Appius Claudius, that your *hair* would be the last thing to be thought of.'

"'But, Mr. Macready,' I resumed, 'there is no sense in such energetic acting, causing me to utter involuntary exclamations by jerking me so strongly into your arms, and, above all, hugging my head so violently in your assumed frantic and fatherly outbursts of affection as to rumple my curls into frightful disorder.'

"His reply was: 'Miss Tree, I cannot abate what I consider a proper degree of fatherly exultation at the safety of an endangered daughter, and therefore you must submit to my professional vehemence, which I cannot control.'

"'Well,' I thought, 'I will find a way to make you *feel* like Mr. Macready, though you may not

at the same time be required to *forget* Virginius.' And I did so in this way: I directed the hair-dresser, in pinning on my characteristic extra appendages, to let the points of the pins mischievously, but not viciously, stick *outward* instead of *inward;* and that night the involuntary exclamation came from Mr. Macready, not from me.

"Rushing frantically on the stage, he cried out as I sprang into his arms, 'My Virginia! my Virginia!' But as his hands clasped my head for the usual hug he uttered a quick cry of 'Ah!' accompanied with rather a loud stage-whisper of 'Good Heavens! what have you got in your curls?' And this assured me that the pins had produced the unrehearsed stage-effect I had intended.

"After that night," added Miss Tree, "I had no complaint to make of an undue expression of fatherly energy on the part of Mr. Macready."

AN AMPLE APOLOGY.

Attached to the theatres of Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Washington was an excellent actor and a man of good principles, although given to occasional excess in drinking; which, fortunately for the welfare of society, is not now regarded with so much leniency as it was forty years ago. It was remarkable that when under the influence of liquor this gentleman was rigidly exact and formal in his deportment and enunciation—so much so as to call forth the expression, "As polite, as correct, and as drunk as Charley Webb," when his

friends were speaking of any one in the "how-came-you-so?" condition.

Miss Tree was performing in the old Chestnut Street Theatre. The play for the night was *The Gamester*, Miss Tree playing the devoted wife, Mrs. Beverly—one of those performances which few of her admirers can ever forget. Mr. Webb was playing Stukely, the villain, and in one of the most interesting scenes, in consequence of having taken too much sherry at his dinner, he was somewhat oblivious of the language of the part. Miss Tree gave him, as it is termed, "the word" several times, which Webb took up with so much politeness and formality as to render the scene ridiculous, considering the stern villainy of the character and his hateful relation to Mrs. Beverly. Finally, the audience became aware of the true state of the case, and, as usual, in spite of their respect for the lady, began to titter, while some hissed.

Miss Tree was compelled at last to walk up the stage and take a seat, with her back to Mr. Webb. By this time Webb had begun to feel how matters stood, and, a thoroughly polite man under any circumstances, he was now overwhelmingly punctilious, and with assumed sobriety of tone, though hesitating in articulation and rather unsteady in his walk, he approached the footlights with a low bow and said: "Ladies and gentlemen, I am anxious to remove from your minds an evident misunderstanding concerning the true situation of affairs existing on this stage. I see

—indeed I *feel*—I may say I very sensibly *realize*—the fact that you perceive that *somebody* here is intoxi-intoxica-; that is, in plainer words, drunk! Now, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to say that justice compels me to assure you, for fear your impressions should lead you to an erroneous conclusion—to *assure* you, I say, that *whoever* is guilty of the unpardonable impropriety I have alluded to, on the honor of a gentleman believe me the offending party is *not—Miss Ellen Tree!*"

CHAPTER VIII.

SHAKESPEARE AND HIS CRITICS.

(WITH EXTRACTS FROM MAURICE MORGAN'S ESSAY.)

WHAT we may comprehend through our feelings rather than our understandings enters largely into the composition of Shakespeare's characters, their motives, and their actions. It is only through close observation and familiar intercourse with his creations that we may discover the secret source of their production, but we readily sympathize with them, and recognize their features as perfectly as we do those of our friends and kindred. The language of the heart explains the working of the brain, and it may be said that we perceive the true Shakespearian meaning through the eye of the soul before we see it through the eye of the mind. The creations of Shakespeare are so entirely in agreement with those of Nature that, to use his own words in another direction, they are "the true and perfect image of life indeed." The lovers of the great bard when only the stage knew his works may have been influenced by affection rather than knowledge in awarding him their unbounded admiration; but their approval has since been more than endorsed

by men of learning and wisdom, who, in some instances, have almost grudgingly admitted his perfection as a poet, and pronounced him as a dramatist beyond compare. His warm friend and just admirer, Ben Jonson, in the severity of his criticism said there were matters in the Shakespearian compositions that for the author's reputation he had better have stricken out; other writers, again, of great repute, have pronounced it heresy to find any fault with their oracle; while Voltaire, who did not and could not understand Shakespeare, affected to consider him as beneath criticism, and charged the English people with worshipping "a mere barbarian." Some English critics who aspired to poetic honors themselves have denounced our favorite bard as "a kind of wild Proteus or madman," and would, but for a wholesome fear of public justice, have essayed "to knock down the Poet with the butt-end of a critical staff;" and a writer of the last century, a man of the world in a refined sense, and an accomplished scholar, takes the ground that many blemishes exist on Shakespeare's pages for which he could not be held originally responsible. This writer, in an admirable essay, complains, as does the Rev. John Upton, Prebendary of Rochester, in a learned work on Shakespeare (1745), that the fault-finding spirit of too many English critics disabled their judgment and rendered them incapable of a just perception of the inimitable beauties which lie thickly strewn all through the works of the man for whom the world entertains so pro-

found an admiration. Nearly a century ago one of the most original and able critics of Shakespeare, Mr. Maurice Morgan,* said that in dramatic composition the impression is the fact. The extracts from his essay which compose the present chapter cannot fail to be acceptable to the student of Shakespeare. I have found the author's ideas to be consonant with my own regarding the impression which Shakespeare's characters make upon the mind, irrespective of operations of the mere understanding.

STUDIES FROM MAURICE MORGAN'S "ESSAY ON SHAKESPEARE."

"Though there may be in the composition much calculated to puzzle and mislead the understanding with regard to the details of delineation, yet the true conception of a character, as a whole, may depend upon the impression it makes upon the mind. It must be remembered that the mental impressions are distinguished here from the understanding. I wish to avoid everything that looks like subtlety and refinement, but this is a distinction which we all comprehend.

* Maurice Morgan, Esq., was of an ancient and respectable family in Wales. He served as Under-Secretary of State to the marquis of Landsdowne, and was afterward secretary to the embassy for ratifying the peace with America (1783). He died March 28, 1802, in the seventy-seventh year of his age. The extracts I have quoted in these pages are from his *Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff*, the only work of the kind the author ever published.

Dr. Symmons, in his *Life of Milton*, says of Mr. Morgan: "His repeated injunctions have impelled his executors to an indiscriminate destruction of his papers, some of which, in the walks of politics, metaphysics, and criticism, would have planted a permanent laurel on his grave."

"There are none of us unconscious of certain feelings or sensations of mind which do not seem to have passed through the understanding—the effect, I suppose, of some secret influences from without acting upon a certain mental sense, and producing feelings and passions in just correspondence to the force and variety of those influences on the one hand, and to the quickness of our sensibility on the other. Be the cause, however, what it may, the fact is undoubtedly so; which is all I am concerned in.

"And it is equally a fact, which every man's experience may avouch, that the understanding and those feelings are frequently at variance. The latter often arise from the most minute circumstances, and frequently from such as the understanding cannot estimate or even recognize; whereas the understanding delights in abstractions and in general propositions, which, however true considered as such, are very seldom—I had like to have said *never*—perfectly applicable to any particular case. And hence, among other causes, it is that we often condemn or applaud characters and actions on the credit of some logical process, while our hearts revolt and would fain lead us to a very different conclusion.

"The understanding seems, for the most part, to take cognizance of actions only, and from these to infer motives and characters; but the sense we have been speaking of proceeds in a contrary course, and determines of actions from certain *first principles* of character which seem wholly

out of the reach of the understanding. We cannot, indeed, do otherwise than admit that there must be distinct principles of character in every distinct individual; the manifest variety, even in the minds of infants, will oblige us to this. But what are these first principles of character? Not the objects, I am persuaded, of the understanding, and yet we take as strong impressions of them as if we could compare and assort them in a syllogism. We often love or hate at first sight, and indeed, in general, dislike or approve by some secret reference to these principles; and we judge even of conduct, not from any idea of abstract good or evil in the nature of actions, but by referring those actions to a supposed original character in the man himself. I do not mean that we *talk* thus; we could not indeed, if we would, explain ourselves in detail on this head: we can neither account for impressions and passions nor communicate them to others by *words*. Tones and looks will sometimes convey the *passion* strangely, but the *impression* is incommunicable. The same causes may produce it, indeed, at the same time in many, but it is the separate possession of each, and not in its nature transferable; it is an imperfect sort of instinct, and proportionably dumb.

"We might, indeed, if we choose it, candidly confess to one another that we are greatly swayed by these feelings, and are by no means so rational in all points as we could wish; but this would be a betrayal of the interests of that high faculty, the understanding, which we so value ourselves upon,

and which we more peculiarly call our own. This, we think, must not be, and so we huddle up the matter, concealing it as much as possible both from ourselves and others.

"In books, indeed, wherein character, motive, and action are all alike subjected to the understanding, it is generally a very clear case, and we make decisions compounded of them all; and thus we are willing to approve of Candide, though he kills my lord the Inquisitor and runs through the body of Baron of Thunder-ten-trouchk, the son of his patron and the brother of his beloved Cunegonde; but in real life, I believe, my lords the judges would be apt to inform the gentlemen of the jury that my lord the Inquisitor was ill-killed, as Candide did not proceed on the urgency of the moment, but on the speculation only of future evil. And, indeed, this clear perception in novels and plays of the union of character and action not seen in Nature is the principal defect of such compositions, and what renders them but ill pictures of human life and wretched guides of conduct.

"But if there was one man in the world who could make a more perfect draught of real Nature, and steal such impressions on his audience without their special notice as should keep their hold in spite of any error of their understanding, and should thereupon venture to introduce an apparent incongruity of character and action susceptible of explanation, such an imitation would be worth our nicest curiosity and attention. But in

such a case as this the reader might expect that he should find us all talking the language of the understanding only; that is, censuring the action, with very little conscientious investigation even of *that*, and transferring the censure in every odious color to the actor himself, how much soever our hearts and affections might secretly revolt; for as to the *impression*, we have already observed that it has no tongue, nor are its operation and influence likely to be made the subject of conference and communication.

"A felt propriety or truth of art from an unseen though supposed adequate cause we call *Nature*. A like feeling of propriety and truth, supposed without a cause or as seeming to be derived from causes inadequate, fantastic, and absurd, such as wands, circles, incantations, and so forth, we call by the general name *Magic*, including all the train of superstition, witches, ghosts, fairies, and the rest.

"*Reason* is confined to the line of visible existence; our passions and our fancy extend far beyond into the obscure; but, however lawless their operations may seem, the images they so wildly form have yet a relation to truth, and are the shadows at least, however fantastic, of reality.

"I am not investigating, but passing, this subject, and must therefore leave behind me much curious speculation. Of personification, however, we should observe that those which are made out of abstract ideas are the creatures of the understanding only; thus, of the mixed modes, virtue,

beauty, wisdom, and others, what are they but very obscure ideas of qualities considered as abstracted from any subject whatever? The mind cannot steadily contemplate such an abstraction; what then does it do? Invent or imagine a subject in order to support these qualities, and hence we get the nymphs or goddesses of virtue, of beauty, or of wisdom, the very obscurity of the ideas being the cause of their conversion into sensible objects with precision both of feature and of form.

"But as reason has its personifications, so has passion. Every passion has its object, though often indistinct and obscure; to be brought nearer, then, and rendered more distinct, it is *personified*, and Fancy fantastically decks or aggravates the *form* and adds 'a local habitation and a name.' But passion is the dupe of its own artifice, and realizes the image it had formed. The Grecian theology was mixed of both these kinds of personification. Of the images produced by passion it must be observed that they are the images, for the most part, not of the passions themselves, but of their remote effects. *Guilt* looks through the medium, and beholds a devil; *fear*, spectres of every sort; *hope*, a smiling cherub; *malice* and *envy* see hags and witches and enchanters dire; while the innocent and the young behold with fearful delight the tripping fairy whose shadowy form the moon gilds with its softest beams.

"Extravagant as all this appears in a prosaic sense, it has its laws so precise that we are sensi-

ble both of a local and temporary and of a universal magic; the first derived from the general nature of the human mind, influenced by particular habits, institutions, and climate; and the latter, from the same general nature, abstracted from those considerations. Of the first sort the *machinery* in *Macbeth* is a very striking instance —a machinery, which, however exquisite at the time, has already lost more than half its force, and the gallery now laughs in some places where it ought to shudder; but the magic of *The Tempest* is lasting and universal.

"There is, besides, a species of writing for which we have no term of art, and which holds a middle place between Nature and magic. I mean where fancy, either alone or mingled with reason, or reason assuming the appearance of fancy, governs some real existence; but the whole of this art is portrayed in a single play —in the real madness of Lear, in the assumed wildness of Edgar, and in the professional fantasque of the Fool,—all operating to contrast and heighten each other. There is yet another feat of this kind which Shakespeare has performed; he has personified *Malice* in his Caliban —a character kneaded up of three distinct natures, the diabolical, the human, and the brute. The rest of his preternatural beings are images of *effects* only, and cannot subsist but in a surrounding atmosphere of those passions from which they are derived. Caliban is the passion itself, or rather a compound of malice, servility,

and lust substantiated, and therefore best shown in contrast with the lightness of Ariel and the innocence of Miranda.

"Witches are sometimes substantial existences, supposed to be possessed by or allied to the unsubstantial; but the witches in *Macbeth* are a gross sort of shadows—'bubbles of the earth,' as they are finely called by Banquo. Ghosts differ from other imaginary beings in this, that they belong to no element, have no specific nature or character, and are effects, however harsh the expression, supposed without a cause; the reason of which is, that they are not the creation of the poet, but the servile copies or transcripts of popular imagination connected with supposed reality and religion. Should the poet assign the true cause, and call them the mere painting or 'coinage of the brain,' he would disappoint his own end and destroy the being he had raised. Should he assign fictitious causes, and add a specific nature and a local habitation, it would not be endured, or the effect would be lost by the conversion of one being into another. The approach to reality in this case defeats all the arts and managements of fiction.

"The whole play of *The Tempest* is of so high and superior a nature that Dryden, who had attempted to imitate in vain, might well exclaim that

> Shakespeare's *magic* could not copied be;
> Within that circle none durst walk but *He*.

* * * * *

"The reader must be sensible of something in the composition of Shakespeare's characters which renders them essentially different from those drawn by other writers.

"The characters of every drama must indeed be grouped, but in the groups of other poets the parts which are not seen do not in fact exist. There is a certain roundness and integrity in the forms of Shakespeare which give them an independence as well as a relation, insomuch that we often meet with passages which, though perfectly felt, cannot be sufficiently explained in words without unfolding the whole character of the speaker. It may be said of the composition of his characters in a conjectural sense that they were the effect not so much of a minute and laborious attention as of a certain comprehensive energy of mind involving within itself all the effects of system and of labor.

"Bodies of all kinds, whether of metals, plants, or animals, are supposed to possess certain first principles of *being*, and to have an existence independent of the accidents which form their magnitude or growth; those accidents are supposed to be drawn in from the surrounding elements, but not indiscriminately; each plant and each animal imbibes those things only which are proper to its own distinct nature, and which have, besides, such a secret relation to each other as to be capable of forming a perfect union and coalescence. But so variously are the surrounding ele-

ments mingled and disposed that each particular body, even of those under the same species, has yet some *peculiar* of its own. Shakespeare appears to have considered the being and growth of the human mind as analogous to this system; there are certain qualities and capacities which he seems to have considered as first principles, the chief of which are certain energies of courage and activity, according to their degrees, together with different degrees and sorts of sensibilities, and a capacity varying likewise in the degree of discernment and intelligence. The rest of the composition is drawn in from an atmosphere of surrounding things; that is, from the various influences of the different laws, religions, and governments in the world, and from those of the different ranks and inequalities in society, and from the different professions of men, encouraging or repressing passions of particular sorts, and inducing different modes of thinking and habits of life; and he seems to have known intuitively what those influences in particular were which this or that original constitution would most freely imbibe, and which would most easily associate and coalesce. But all these things being in different situations very differently disposed, and those differences exactly discerned by him, he found no difficulty in marking every individual, even among characters of the same sort, with something peculiar and distinct. Climate and complexion demand their influence. 'Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee, and love

thee after,' is a sentiment characteristic of, and fit only to be uttered by, a *Moor*.

"But it was not enough for Shakespeare to have formed his characters with the most perfect truth and coherence; it was further necessary that he should possess a wonderful facility of compressing, as it were, his own spirit into these images, and of giving alternate animation to the forms. This was not to be done *from without;* he must have *felt* every varied situation, and have spoken through the organ he had formed.

"Such an intuitive comprehension of things and such a facility must unite to produce a Shakespeare. The reader will not now be surprised if I affirm that those characters in Shakespeare which are seen only in part are yet capable of being unfolded and understood in the whole, every part being, in fact, relative, and inferring all the rest. It is true that the point of action or sentiment which we are most concerned in is always held out for our special notice. But who does not perceive that there is a peculiarity about it which conveys a relish of the whole? And very frequently, when no particular point presses, he boldly makes a character act and speak from those parts of the composition which are *inferred* only and not distinctly shown. This produces a wonderful effect; it seems to carry us beyond the poet to Nature itself, and gives an integrity and truth to facts and character which they could not otherwise obtain; and this is, in reality, that art in Shakespeare which, being with-

drawn from our notice, we more emphatically call *Nature.*

"A felt propriety and truth from causes unseen I take to be the highest form of poetic composition. If the characters of Shakespeare are thus whole, and, as it were, original, while those of almost all other writers are mere imitation, it may be fit to consider them rather as historic than dramatic beings, and when occasion requires to account for their conduct from the *whole* of character, from general principles, from latent motives, and from policies not avowed.

* * * * * *

"When the hand of time shall have brushed off his present editors and commentators, and when the very name of Voltaire, and even the memory of the language in which he has written, shall be no more, the Appalachian Mountains, the banks of the Ohio, and the plains of Scioto shall resound with the accents of this barbarian; in his native tongue he shall roll the genuine passions of Nature; nor shall the griefs of Lear be alleviated or the charms and wit of Rosalind be abated by time. There is indeed nothing perishable about him except that very learning which he is said so much to want. He had not, it is true, enough for the demands of the age in which he lived, but he had perhaps too much for the reach of his genius and the interest of his fame. Milton and he will carry the decayed remnants and fripperies of ancient mythology into more distant ages than they are, by their own force, entitled to

extend, and the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, upheld by them, lay a new claim to unmerited immortality.

"Shakespeare is a name so interesting that it is excusable to stop a moment in any place and at any time to pay his worth the tribute of some admiration. He differs essentially from all other writers; we may profess rather to feel than to understand him; it is safer to say, on many occasions, that we are possessed by him than that we possess him. And no wonder: he scatters the seeds of things, the principles of character and action, with so cunning a hand, yet with so careless an air, and, master of our feelings, submits himself so little to our judgment, that everything seems superior. We discern not his course, we see no connection of cause and effect; we are rapt in ignorant admiration, and claim no kindred with his abilities. All the incidents, all the parts, look like chance, whilst we feel and are sensible that the whole is design. His characters not only act and speak in strict conformity to Nature, but in strict relation to us; just so much is shown as is requisite—just so much is impressed. He commends every passage to our heads and to our hearts, and moulds us as he pleases; and that with so much ease that he never betrays his own exertions. We see these characters act from the mingled motives of passion, reason, interest, habit, and complexion, in all their proportions, when they are supposed to know it not themselves; and we are made to acknowledge that their ac-

tions and sentiments are, from these motives, the necessary result. He at once blends and distinguishes everything; everything is complicated, everything is plain.

"We restrain the further expression of our admiration, lest it should not seem applicable to man; but it is really astonishing that a mere human being, a part of humanity only, should so perfectly comprehend the whole, and that he should possess such exquisite art that, whilst every woman and every child shall feel the whole effect, his learned editors and commentators should yet so very frequently mistake or seem ignorant of the cause. A sceptre or a straw is in his hands of equal efficacy; he needs no selection; he converts everything into excellence; nothing is too great, nothing is too base. Is a character efficient, like Richard, it is everything we can wish; is it otherwise, like Hamlet, it is productive of equal admiration; action produces one mode of excellence, and inaction another. The chronicle, the novel, or the ballad, the king or the beggar, the hero, the madman, the sot, or the fool,—it is all one; nothing is worse, nothing is better; the same genius pervades and is equally admirable in all. Or is a character to be shown in progressive change and the events of years comprised within the hour; with what a magic hand does he prepare and scatter his spells! The understanding must, in the first place, be subdued, and lo! how the rooted prejudices of the child spring up to confound the man!

The weird sisters rise, and order is extinguished; the laws of Nature give way, and leave nothing in our minds but wildness and horror. No pause is allowed us for reflection; horrid sentiments, furious guilt and compunction, air-drawn daggers, murders, ghosts, and enchantment, shake and possess us wholly. In the mean time the process is complete. Macbeth changes under our eye; the milk of human kindness is converted to gall; he has supped full of horrors, and his May of life is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf; whilst we, the fools of amazement, are insensible to the shifting of place and the lapse of time, and till the curtain drops never once awake to the truth of things or recognize the laws of existence.

"On such an occasion a fellow like Rymer, waking from his trance, shall lift up his constable's staff and charge this great magician, this daring practiser of arts inhibited, in the name of Aristotle to surrender; whilst Aristotle himself, disowning his wretched officer, would fall prostrate at his feet and acknowledge his supremacy:*

> 'O supreme of dramatic excellence!' might he say,
> 'Not to me be imputed the insolence of fools.

The bards of Greece were confined within the narrow circle of the Chorus, and hence they found themselves constrained to practise, for the

* [It has been remarked that this apology, which Morgan assigns to Aristotle from his name being improperly used by his *wretched officers*, Rymer and other commentators, is one of the most luminous and critical defences of Shakespeare's not being bound by the unities which perhaps has ever been produced.]—AUTHOR.

most part, the precision and copy the details of Nature. I followed them, and knew not that a larger circle might be drawn, and the drama extended to the whole reach of human genius. Convinced, I see that a more compendious *Nature* may be obtained—a Nature of *effects* only, to which neither the relations of place nor continuity of time are always essential. Nature, condescending to the faculties and apprehensions of man, has drawn through human life a regular chain of visible causes and effects; but Poetry delights in surprises, conceals her steps, seizes at once upon the heart, and obtains the sublime of things, without betraying the rounds of her ascent; true Poesy is magic, not Nature—an effect from causes hidden or unknown. To the magician I prescribed no laws; his law and his power are one; his power is his law. Him, who neither imitates nor is within the reach of imitation, no precedent can or ought to bind, no limits to contain. If his end is obtained, who shall question his course? Means, whether apparent or hidden, are justified in Poesy by success; but *then* most perfect and most admirable when most concealed.'"

CHAPTER IX.

BOOTH AND KEAN IN LONDON.—BOOTH IN AMERICA.

AT the time of Edmund Kean's appearance in London the Drury Lane Theatre was under the management of a committee of the stockholders or patentees, among whom were men of fortune and others distinguished in literature and the arts. As the finances of the theatre were in a low condition, it had been found necessary to concentrate the force of the press and certain influences in society to produce a sensation, and Mr. Kean was selected as the most suitable person "to stir up the town." His eccentric and dazzling style of acting was quite popular in the provincial theatres, where he had been seen by some of the Drury Lane committee, who had invited him to the metrópolis. It was well understood in managerial quarters that, no matter what Kean's genius might be, he lacked a London reputation, and therefore it was necessary that theatrical wire pulling should be set in motion to the fullest extent, that his success might be assured if he should exhibit genius or talent at all equal to the necessities of the occasion.

In spite of every effort to drum up an audience by the usual plan of distributing free tickets or

orders, in consequence of disagreeable weather the house on Kean's first night presented an appearance by no means encouraging. The pit, however, was "papered" with a strong array of what were known as the "heavy swells" of the critical world of London, who, heartily sympathizing with the management, were determined to make things lively with the public. The whole of this well-arranged programme was carried out by management and actor to the satisfaction of all parties concerned. In theatrical parlance, Kean made a "decided hit:" the machinery was set in motion for a brilliant financial success. The genius of the actor and the skill of the managers produced one of those periodic dramatic fevers to which the Londoners have been more or less subject from the days of Garrick and Betty down to those of the present living Sarah Bernhardt.

During the prevalence of what might be called a continuous ovation to the genius of Edmund Kean the English language was almost exhausted in epigrammatic forms of eulogy. Hazlitt, Coleridge, Charles Lamb, and a host of the luminaries of the critical world of London were constant visitors to the theatre and contributors to the press. Lord Byron, Sheridan, and others of the Drury Lane committee complimented the great tragedian with presentations, dinners, and other public manifestations of approval. Among the extravagances of the critics, Southey is reported to have exclaimed, while gazing at Kean in one of his terrible bursts of passion, "He

looks like Michael Angelo's rebellious archangel;" to which a companion replied, "He looks like the archangel himself." Another writer affirmed that "Electricity was not more vivid and instantaneous than Kean's acting." But the "Pelion upon Ossa" of this verbal extravagance culminated in the following brilliant effusion: "The effect of Kean's acting is like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning." This was attributed to Coleridge, and claimed for Charles Lamb, while others accredited it to Lord Byron, as it was thought to bear a strong likeness to the intensified style peculiar to that poet. Tom Moore, with an eye to results in the ups and downs of public opinion, said, "Kean is now in the honeymoon of criticism, but he will soon realize the difference between being written up and being written down."

JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH.

In the midst of this great dramatic furore appeared an actor of sterling worth but modest character, who ventured to enter the lists as "a free lance" and try a tilt with the successful hero of the tournament; but, as "two stars keep not their motion in one sphere," and as London could not "brook the double reign" of Edmund Kean and Junius Brutus Booth, the latter, after a short but brilliant contest, left the field. Booth had been fortunate enough to succeed in leading characters at Covent Garden Theatre, where he had possession of several first-class parts in which he

was popular, and he could no doubt have gained a fair share of the honors had he waited the issue; but he fell a victim to his ambition and an adroit "trick of the trade." Allured by attractive offers, suggested by Mr. Kean, to act equal parts in the same plays, he went over to Drury Lane, and the consequences were such as might have been expected from the overwhelming odds to be encountered in a contest with the established favorite of the town in the very heyday of his success and on his own ground. Booth was overshadowed by Kean, and retired from Drury Lane, and as a consequence met with a cool reception on his return to Covent Garden. With his eccentric character and highly-sensitive organization he must have deeply felt the disappointment which had crushed his aspirations and deprived him of an honorable position; and after playing in some of the minor theatres he became disgusted with English audiences and turned his face westward. The idea of a London failure and the charge of being a mere imitator had preceded him to America, where the critics, taking their cue from these reports, influenced the public mind for a time and prevented a correct estimate of the tragedian's wonderful powers. But he soon struck the keynote of popular appreciation and took a commanding position on the American stage.

Booth, it may be affirmed, displayed the most wonderful combination of intellectual beauty and force with consummate dramatic skill which was ever exhibited in modern times. According to

our theories of dramatic art, and especially of its vocal characteristics, he was only equalled by Garrick himself; and had he happened to have lived in the same period and have been surrounded by the same fortunate influences, he would have proved a greater rival than we are told that great actor found in Barry.

While producing the most brilliant and thrilling effects in dramatic action, Booth seemed to be totally ignorant or independent of mere stage-business, and entirely regardless of the accessories of the stage—matters which modern actors consider of paramount importance.

Booth seemed to have taken for his model the elder Kean, and yet could not be said to have imitated him. They were both men of the most intense and impassioned nature, of poetic temperament, and easily excited to the action of the play, and, when fully aroused, capable of the most fiery and vehement power of expressive utterance. They were alike gifted with voices of subtle and incisive qualities, capacious of every form of expression, from the smothered whisper of tremulous fear and the piercing shriek of physical suffering to the boldest volume of authoritative command and the hollow, sepulchral sound of profound awe or suppressed agony.

With regard to Kean, it may be said that he was very prone to the use of an aspirated and guttural quality of voice, by which unpleasing trait the naturally sonorous character of his tones was obscured and impaired. The same thing

could not be said of Booth's vocal ability, for, though using the aspirated quality with great power and effect in the utterance of malign passions, it was never obtruded upon or mixed with the rich effects of his tones in the expression of the more elevated and ennobling sentiments of his author. He certainly was the most natural of all the actors in his delineations, while he excelled all his contemporaries (save the elder Kean) in the vivid intensity of his emotional expression.

The acting of Booth was characterized by a strictly austere method, so far as it related to the requirements of vocal delineation, to which the mere physical qualities were always subordinated. His author never suffered at his hands, but, on the contrary, the soul of language, it might be said, poured forth with an affluent richness, reminding one of the pictured ideal of eloquence expressed by the painter in ancient times, where streams of amber were portrayed as flowing from the mouth of the orator into the delighted ears of the entranced listeners. The most irregular forms of verse in obedience to Booth's elocutionary skill became smooth and musical as the hum of the bees of Hymettus. In this respect he may be said to have been vastly superior to the elder Kean, whose utterances, aside from those of a purely pathetic nature, were too often marked by a ruggedness of quality and an apparently intentional rapidity, more especially in that portion of his lines which he

deemed of an unimportant character, and which he purposely subordinated to the brilliant flashes of an almost magical intensity in the outbursts of favorite points.

By such prepared and masterly effects, carefully considered and skilfully executed, did Kean carry the feelings of his auditors by storm, and, as it has been said by his contemporaries, "by volcanic eruptions of frenzied passion hold them spellbound in rage or revenge, or overwhelmed with floods of pathos and tenderness." After such an histrionic triumph the impassioned actor would subside into an almost reckless state of slovenly indifference until again aroused to another point-making effort.

From such a view of his dramatic powers it must be acknowledged that Kean's style, while it was calculated to dazzle the intellectual perceptions of the beholder, certainly did not tend to illuminate the language of Shakespeare in the integrity of its unbroken excellence as a finished whole.

It must be conceded that the tragic power of our "American Garrick," as Dr. Rush called Booth, did not suffer in comparison with the delineative "identity"* which was claimed, by

* Among English actors of the school of "identity," as it is termed, the word "abandon" was used to express an earnest taking on of the "spirit" of the part, after the manner of Kean. The head of an old theatrical family, speaking of this specialty, said, "We are all noted for our 'abandon.' My wife, as the profession knows, is remarkable for it, and my daughter (referring to a popular actress) has it in an astonishing degree; but then, you know, she gets her abandon naturally from her mother." The double meaning of the word never struck the old gentleman, or he would no doubt have used some other term.

Kean's admirers, as his great and distinctive excellence. The manner of Booth was noted for a consistent and beautifully graduated order of vocal effects, where the most brilliant and startling results were attained in a perfectly legitimate method of treating the so-considered subordinate parts of the language with a just regard to their proper value, while employing them as the "sullen and base ground" upon which to exhibit those sublime culminations of speech which have won for the actor and the orator in all times the honors paid to genius and perfected art.

While possessing and wielding the greatest intellectual power in dramatic action, there was, as I have before said, a total absence of mere stage-effect or professional trickery in Booth's acting. His was "the art which concealed the art." His acting, while exciting the most thrilling sensations of sympathetic fervor and delight, never suggested a thought of the manner in which the actor produced them, and yet he left the impression of artistic excellence in all the requirements of soul and intellect.

I may here remark that Kean's was the reverse of this. Language was to him, in a great measure, only a means to what he considered the great end of stage-effect in expression, bodily action, and dramatic situation.

In proof of the fact that Booth did not consider himself an imitator of Kean, and also of what I have said regarding his wonderful resources of vocal variety and power,—as proof,

I say, of these facts, Mr. Booth while acting in the theatres of Virginia, where he made his first engagements with American managers, used to act Richard one night in his own style, and the next in that of Mr. Kean; each of which performances, I have been told, was marked with individual traits of extraordinary genius. The perfect mastery with which he treated the personal manner of Kean's acting, while he exhibited his own in distinctive contrast, settled the question (on this side of the water at least) concerning Booth's imitation, while it established him as the peer of Edmund Kean.

Of all the men with whom my professional duties made me acquainted, no one perhaps impressed me so strongly as the elder Booth. There was something peculiar about him that acted like a charm, and commanded the respect and won the esteem of all whose advances he encouraged; but he was, nevertheless, generally undemonstrative and shy. Such was the impression Mr. Booth made upon me and left in my memory, although unable, in any respect, to approve of his eccentric habits, which are familiar to the public.

A morbid tendency of feeling, which gave rise to wild and defiant moods, led him, at times, to things at variance with the conventionalities of society and entirely opposed to his well-known gentlemanly character; and these eccentricities caused coldness and reserve both with himself and his friends. But when the "cloud" passed and his true nature asserted itself, Booth was

capable of winning the love of many and the esteem of all.

His literary tastes and abilities were of a high order, while his mental qualities were remarkable for clearness and range. I remember the first time I was brought into direct contact with the magnetic influence by which he ruled the dramatic scene and swayed his audience. I was quite a lad, and had not been on the stage more than a year or two, when I was selected to play Wilford to his Sir Edward Mortimer for the first time. Booth's face, before he met with the accident which disfigured his nose, was of surpassing beauty, and, speaking in the spirit of enthusiasm, to my mind's eye it always realized the ideal grandeur represented in Hamlet's lines:

> See what a grace was seated on this brow:
> Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
> An eye like Mars, to threaten and command.

Such was the impression made on my youthful mind in gazing for the first time on Booth's features when dressed for Sir Edward Mortimer. The sweetness of a settled melancholy was in his face, while his large, lustrous eye was full of gentle tenderness. But I was destined to see that face and eye in a different light, and to realize a very different feeling from that of quiet admiration.

On the morning of the rehearsal I found the great tragedian pleasant and communicative, and, as I was anxious to learn the business of the

scene and to execute it to the satisfaction of my superior, I was attentive and deeply interested.

My readers will call to mind the relations of Sir Edward Mortimer and his young secretary. The latter was taken from an inferior position in life and elevated to the confidence and friendship of his patron, over whom hung—that fascination to the young—a profound mystery. With that mystery was connected an iron chest which Sir Edward was known to visit often, and always alone, returning from such visits with evident marks of the deepest agitation.

One day Wilford, being engaged in the secluded apartment where the chest was kept, with surprise observed that the key was in the lock. After overcoming honest scruples in a long struggle with fatal curiosity, he knelt before the mysterious chest and turned the key; then, hesitating for a moment, he searched the apartment in order to be satisfied that he was secure from observation. Now the stage-business which Mr. Booth was so particular in teaching me was this: I was enjoined to take time, and after a careful survey of the premises to kneel on one knee, place my left hand on the lid of the chest, then, gently raising it, to hold it back, and, looking closely in, to place my right hand on the papers which it contained, turning them over as if seeking for something hidden beneath. The strictest injunction was given to pay no attention to what was to follow on the part of Sir Edward, no matter how long the suspense might last, but

when I felt his hand upon my shoulder to turn abruptly, letting the lid of the chest fall with a slam, and, still on my knee, hold a firm attitude till I was warned by a sudden pressure of Mr. Booth's hand to rise to my feet and stand before him.

On the night of the performance I was nervous and ill at ease from the want of a firm and assured hold upon the words of my part, which I had mastered at short notice and with more attention to the sense than to special expression. However, I contrived to keep up with the action of the play. At length I found myself in the presence of the mysterious chest. I was almost breathless with excitement and from anxiety consequent on my strong desire to execute Mr. Booth's orders to the very letter. I had proceeded so far as to open the chest, and, stooping over the papers, awaited trembling, on my knee, the appointed signal for action. The time seemed an eternity, but it came at last. The heavy hand fell on my shoulder. I turned, and there, with the pistol held to my head, stood Booth, glaring like an infuriated demon. Then for the first time I comprehended the reality of acting. The fury of that passion-flamed face and the magnetism of the rigid clutch upon my arm paralyzed my muscles, while the scintillating gleam of the terrible eyes, like the green and red flashes of an enraged serpent, fascinated and fixed me spellbound to the spot. A sudden revulsion of feeling caused me to spring from my knees, but, bewil-

dered with fright and a choking sensation of undefined dread, I fell heavily to the stage, tripping Mr. Booth, who still clutched my shoulder. I brought him down with me, and for a moment we lay prostrate. But suddenly recovering himself, he sprang to his feet, with almost superhuman strength dragging me up, as I clung to his arm in terror. Shaking himself free of my grasp, I sank down again stunned and helpless. I was aroused to consciousness, however, by a voice calling on me, in suppressed accents, to rise, and then became aware that Mr. Booth was kneeling at my side. He helped me to my feet, whispering in my ear a few encouraging words, and then dexterously managed, in spite of the accident and my total inability to speak, to continue the scene to its close.

Thus was I, an unfortunate tyro, saved from disgrace by the coolness and kindness of one who had every reason to be moved by a very different state of mind; for it was evident that, but for the actor's readiness and skill in improvising the business of the stage, one of the most important and interesting scenes of the play would have proved a mortifying failure. The kindness of the act was its own reward, for my present recollection is that the audience never evinced the slightest indication of the presence of a disturbing element, but, on the contrary, gave evidence of their satisfaction by applause at the critical moment to which I have alluded.

In more than one way Booth was a true poetic

genius and dramatic artist. He always seemed to grasp the ideal beauty and intellectual power of the poet's thought, and worked out, from the author's language, the full force of the emotion or passion which was the root of its mental growth. Thus mastering the intent and purpose of the words, he invested their utterance with the graceful foliage or the more vigorous strength of branch and limb from the power of his varied and wonderful forms of expression. This he seemed to do apparently with so much real enjoyment of the poet's innermost feelings that the fervor of a gratified sense seized upon his hearers, and established a congenial and sympathetic communion with the enthusiasm of the actor.

This peculiar kind of radiated and reflected ardor of expression was conspicuously exemplified in the glow and vigor and sonorous roundness of Booth's voice in his utterance of the words of Sir Edward Mortimer in the following scene:

Library. SIR EDWARD *discovered at the writing-table.* ADAM WINTERTON *attending.*

SIR EDWARD.

Well bethought; send Walter to me.
I would employ him; he must ride for me
On business of much import.

WINTERTON.

Lackaday! that it should chance so! I have sent him forth
To Winchester, to buy me flannel hose,
For winter's coming on. Good lack! that things should fall so crossly!

SIR EDWARD.

Nay, nay, do not fret;
'Tis better that my business cool, good Adam,
Than thy old limbs.
Is Wilford waiting?

WINTERTON.

He is—
Here in the hall, sir.

SIR EDWARD.

Send him in.

WINTERTON.

I shall, sir. Heaven bless you! Heaven bless you! [*Exit.*

SIR EDWARD.

Good-morning, good old heart.
This honest soul
Would fain look cheery in my house's gloom,
And, like a gay and sturdy evergreen,
Smiles in the midst of blast and desolation,
Where all around him withers.
Well! well! wither,
Perish, this frail and fickle frame, this clay,
That in its dross-like compound doth contain
The mind's pure ore and essence! Oh that mind,
That mind of man! that godlike spring of action!
That source whence learning, virtue, honor, flow!
Which lifts us to the stars, which carries us
O'er the swoll'n waters of the angry deep,
As swallows skim the air!—that fame's sole fountain,
That doth transmit a fair and spotless name
When the vile trunk is rotten! Give me that!
Oh give me but to live in after age
Remembered and unsullied! Heaven and earth!
Let my pure flame of honor shine in story
When I am cold in death, and the slow fire
That wears my vitals now will no more move me
Than would a corpse within a monument!

Books! books!
(My only commerce now) will sometimes rouse me
Beyond my nature; I have been so warmed,
So heated, by a well-turned rhapsody,
That I have seemed the hero of the tale
So glowingly described. Draw me a man
Struggling for fame, attaining, keeping it,
Dead ages since, and the historian
Decking his memory in polished phrase,
And I can follow him through every turn,
Grow wild in his exploits, myself himself,
Until the thick pulsation of my heart
Wakes me to ponder on the thing I am.

The first time I heard him deliver this passage I remember that he impressed me with a realizing sense of what a delightful state of unalloyed pleasure that reader was capable of enjoying who could in his communion with the words of the dead past conjure up their intellectual power at will and mingle his own senses with the very atmosphere of mental beauty and truth.

Again, in his performance of Richard the Third, after giving utterance to the language of the author in tones of mingled softness and subtlety, expressive of the opposite states of tender passion and crafty cruelty, he would take a bolder flight, and, assuming the aspect of the frowning and fiery Mars, with his soul in arms and eager for the fray, showed himself able to conjure up within the deep cells of innermost feeling a true conception and embodiment of the chivalry and glory of the warrior-soul.

Though small in size, and never well equipped

in the external vestments of royalty (for he was what is termed in the profession "a bad dresser"), he exhibited the true lineaments of martial valor and majestic heroism, which were far beyond the meretricious adornments of the costumer. It was then that, under the inspiration of an intuitive Shakespearian conception, he was able to infuse into the language, not the dead form of traditional dramatic utterance, but the soul itself of vital passion; and the minds of the excited spectators beheld not only the true semblance of a kingly warrior, but in the play of their imagination realized the spirit, if not the bodily presence, of embattled hosts. Though they might, outside the magic circle, forget the illusion of the scene and call to mind the realities of the faded tinsel of the stage, and look upon the pasteboard defences of the supernumeraries rather as the fitting vesture of Falstaff's ragged regiment, yet, in spite of such belittling recollections, they could not soon forget the startling effects of the poetry of war as depicted by the actor and made real by his presence and his voice.*

Some time after the performance of *The Iron Chest* before referred to, in a quarrel with a brother-performer, who under intense excitement

* Nearly a quarter of a century ago Mr. Charles Kean got up (as it is termed) *Richard the Third* at a cost of some thousands of dollars at the Park Theatre, New York. One night, while in the green-room, he said to his wife, "My dear Ellen, these costly equipments, after all, are destructive of the actor's vocation; the people are so engrossed with looking at the scenery and dresses that they have no time to think of the acting. I feel as if I had nothing to do but to walk on the stage and off again."

struck him with a heavy blunt weapon, Booth's nose (naturally prominent and exquisitely formed) was broken and dreadfully disfigured, thereby for a time materially affecting his voice in its sonorous purity. With many, such an obstruction would have proved an impassable barrier to further progress in the profession. But Booth, who was as familiar with physiological as with intellectual matters, proceeded at once to overcome the impediment by a special discipline of the functions of the vocal mechanism, and, finally conquering the difficulty, restored the facial organ to its original capacity for producing its peculiar sounds. There was, however, in his restored vocality a more than usual nasal quality, though not enough to mar the resonant breadth and firmness of his voice, or the musical ring which made it in its cadences an exposition of the pensive sounds which Collins tells us Melancholy "poured through the mellow horn," or those opposite tones, so "loud and dread," blown from "the war-denouncing trumpet" by the spirit of Revenge.

VANDENHOFF.

Mr. Vandenhoff the Elder (the father of George Vandenhoff, the eminent actor and elocutionist) was in all probability the finest tragedian of the classic school of acting ever seen on the American stage. He was a scholar and a gentleman of refined manners, as well as a great actor. I saw him first in Coriolanus, when he impressed me as the true ideal of the Roman character more thor-

oughly than any actor I had ever seen. The proud patrician himself could not, in my mind, have had a more lordly and warrior-like bearing than Vandenhoff imparted to Shakespeare's Roman hero. There was a sharp ring in his voice and an incisive stroke in his utterance of command and rebuke that rung the words like a shot, energizing every sentence, leaving nothing uncertain to the understanding, the feeling, or the ear; while in his declamatory or deeply contemplative tones there were the stately pace of quantity and the measured flow of rhythm, which gave to his recitations a grace and dignity fully equal to all the requirements of the Tragic Muse.

His Cato was a revelation to the young American actor of a half century ago in fine elocution and courtly manners. If John Philip Kemble was a more perfect Cato than Vandenhoff, then was Kemble a greater actor than even his storied record makes him appear. Bulwer's Richelieu, as impersonated by Vandenhoff, was not only the crafty statesman, but, what no other actor ever made him, so far as my impressions are concerned, the proud, haughty, imperious churchman. The very impress of the Vatican marked his bearing in both voice and action. When he drew "the awful circle of our solemn Church," and threatened even the crowned king who should violate its sanctity with the scathing fire of Rome's dread curse, the effect was exceedingly impressive. It was not the too common exhibition of an actor's personal denunciation worked to a climax of in-

tensity to produce a professional effect. In Vandenhoff you beheld the embodiment of the power of Rome, and in his voice of solemn earnestness and conscious dignity you felt what would be the fatal consequence of braving the mandates of the supreme head of the Church.

Mr. Vandenhoff was playing an engagement at the old Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, about 1838, during which his performance of Macbeth was accompanied with a scene behind the curtain quite dramatic in its character, but not at all in keeping with the tragedy.

The second act was on, and Mr. Vandenhoff, after speaking the dagger soliloquy, had made his exit to perform the deed which was "to make the very stones prate of his whereabouts."

In the way of explanation I will here state that when Macbeth passes through the stage-door of the apartment of the "sleeping king" to perpetrate the murder, he enters a kind of corner box in which the prompter stands. It is enclosed by a frame on hinges, and can be enlarged at pleasure. Now, in this space the "property-man," as he is termed, places for the use of Macbeth a small table on which are a looking-glass, lighted candles, and a towel, together with chalk to give a pallid hue to the face, and a pot of liquid red coloring-matter to smear the hands and daggers of the murderer.

Mr. Vandenhoff, as I have said, had made his exit from the stage, and Lady Macbeth had entered and was making her speech, while her con-

sort was busily employed, as is the custom, in putting his hair in disorder and reducing the color of his cheeks to the proper pallor before reappearing on the scene. At this interesting moment a gentleman who had insisted on seeing the tragedian on important business, in spite of the doorkeeper's efforts to restrain him, had made his way to the box I have described, and, pushing open the door, found himself face to face with the murderous thane, who was holding in his blood-stained grasp the daggers, on which, brush in hand, an attendant was splashing the sanguineous fluid. The reader may imagine the state of the case as the two men stood staring at each other in mutual surprise.

"Mr. Vandenhoff," said the bewildered visitor, "the Sons of St. George desire—"

Here the actor, retaining his attitude and fetching his breath in gasps and sobs, so that he might develop the excited state of feeling proper to the deed of blood he had just committed, exclaimed in husky, suppressed tones, "Mr. Tams, I am astonished that you should—"

Here broke in the visitor with, "Mr. Vandenhoff, the Sons of St. George—"

Then the excited tragedian: "Sir, you must see that I— More blood, if you please, Mr. Wards," holding out his daggers to the attendant.

"But," said Mr. Tams, "you promised to return—"

Macbeth was now striking out with his daggers, as if still stabbing the old king, and in close prox-

imity to the person of Mr. Tams, speaking all the time with increased vehemence, though in suppressed tones: "Don't you see, sir, that I cannot, sir—"

Just then the cue was heard, and, dashing on the stage, Macbeth, as he struck his attitude, cried out in all the terror of conscious guilt,

I have done the deed!
Didst thou not hear a noise?

CHAPTER X.

MISS DECAMP.—INCIDENTS AND ANECDOTES OF THE DECAMP AND KEMBLE FAMILIES.

THE *London Monthly Mirror* (1801) says: "There are among the profession many eminent characters whose private conduct reflects honor on their public station. Of such no one is more worthy both of praise and imitation than the lady whose name adorns the head of this article.

"Miss DeCamp was born at Vienna on the 17th of January, 1774; her father, George Louis DeCamp, was a gentleman of considerable estimation as a musician. His real name, however, was De Fleury, and he was descended from the younger branch of that family in France. Allured by the prospect of patronage which had been promised him by several English noblemen then resident abroad, he quitted Germany for England, where, although his great merits were acknowledged, yet his modesty and unassuming diffidence, too often the attendants on extraordinary talents, were an unfortunate bar to his success.

"Miss DeCamp, at the age of six years, was retained at the opera-house as one of the Cupidons of Novarre's ballets; from thence she trans-

ferred her juvenile exertions to the elegant theatre of Monsieur le Texier, where she performed, at the age of only eight years, the character of Zelie in *La Comedie de la Calombe*, written by the celebrated Countess de Genlis. Here Miss DeCamp met with particular notice and patronage, and from this period we may date the commencement of that distinguished esteem and patronage, from persons of the first fashion in this country, which, to her honor, she retains to this hour.

"The Prince of Wales, who had not unfrequently witnessed her youthful performances, discovered her extraordinary merit, which seemed to promise a more profitable display on a stage of higher attraction. His Royal Highness recommended our heroine to Mr. Colman, Sr., as a young lady who might improve her own taste in the theatre of the Haymarket, and at the same time render a service to his management by assisting in the ballets and other novelties that might be produced in the course of the summer seasons. Miss DeCamp was accordingly engaged by that gentleman, and appeared for the first time on that stage in a little dance under the title of *Jamie's Return*, with the young D'Egville.

"At the end of the Haymarket season Mr. King, the then acting manager of Drury Lane Theatre, tendered her an engagement of superior advantage, both as to profit and opportunity of appearing before the public.

"Her father's disappointments in this country

had made him resolve to return to Germany; he had therefore neglected to instruct Miss DeCamp in a language which he considered would never turn to any account than as a mere accomplishment; so that when he died, leaving a wife and several children, our heroine, the eldest, and then only twelve years old, had not even learned to read English, the little characters in which she had acquired so much applause, such as the Page in *The Orphan*, the Prince of Wales in *Richard the Third*, etc. etc., having been taught her by mere dint of repetition. By the death of her father having lost all hope of support except that which might result from her own labor, and having uniformly detested the idea of being anything but an actress, she determined by industry to make up the deficiency of an early education; and those advantages which were denied her by the narrowness of her circumstances were amply compensated by the assistance of two friends. The Viscountess Percival taught her reading, writing, and arithmetic; and the accomplished Miss Buchannan instructed her in music, Italian, and geography.

"Her first appearance at Drury Lane was in *Richard Cœur de Lion*, in 1786, and, by her performance of the part of Julie she contributed greatly to the success and run of that elegant entertainment.

"As Miss DeCamp increased in years she gradually disclosed the extent of those talents with which Nature and education have so un-

commonly gifted her. An ear naturally correct, and very sedulous application to the science of music, recommended her to a singing cast of characters. In the summer season of 1792, Mr. Johnstone, for his benefit reversed the characters of the *Beggar's Opera* by way of procuring an overflow to the better profit of the actor. Old Bannister on this occasion was assigned to the tender part of Polly, Johnstone to Lucy, and the redoubtable Macheath was undertaken by our heroine. The *airs* were given in a manner that obtained reiterated applause, and it is but justice to give her the praise of having executed them with peculiar taste and science; and as for the *acting* of the character, there has been nothing near it, by any Macheath before or since, during the recollection of the writer of this article. Miss DeCamp is in private life equally the object of our commendation as in the public execution of the duties of her profession, her filial attention to her parent and her family, her respectful acquiescence with their wishes, and the uniform gentleness of her manners and disposition, have gained her an universal reputation for amiable and exemplary conduct.

"Complete in all the elegant accomplishments of life, Miss DeCamp seems rather formed for the endearing offices of domestic enjoyment than the bustle of a profession exposed to the perpetual demands of a captious public and the secret malevolence of professional individuals."

For a period of twenty years Miss DeCamp

had made her name famous in the annals of the stage. Mr. Charles Kemble wooed and won the lady, making her his wife in 1806.

Mrs. Charles Kemble was of exceptional excellence in sprightly parts, in chambermaids, and all characters where pantomimic action was needed. It was said her knowledge of stage-business was perfect, while in point of industry no one exceeded her.

CHARLES KEMBLE.

Mr. Charles Kemble made his first appearance in 1792 as Orlando in *As You Like It.* In 1820 he had attained the zenith of his reputation. Mr. John Taylor makes the following notice:

"Mr. Charles Kemble, who now appears to so much advantage on the stage, when he was rather a fine sturdy lad than a young man held an appointment in a government office, but being anxious to go upon the stage, he consulted me on the subject. I confess that, though he was intelligent and well-educated, there was such a rustic plainness in his manner that I did not see any promise of excellence in him, and therefore advised him to keep to his situation, which was a progressive one, from which, I told him, in due time he would be able to retire on a comfortable independence. He told me that his brother had expressed the same opinion, and had given him the same advice. Hence it appeared that Mr. Kemble and myself were bad prophets, since his brother Charles has displayed abilities which would

have done honor to the stage at any period. It may, however, be said that Mr. Kemble perhaps saw his brother's talents with eyes more discerning than mine, and only discouraged his theatrical bent from a conviction of the difficulty and uncertainty of the profession.

"Mr. Charles Kemble was very early in life placed for education at a college in Douay, from which he returned with a competent knowledge of the Latin and French languages, and since he has been an established performer in London he has, I understand, acquired the Italian and German.

"As an actor he is a worthy successor to his brother, particularly in the part of Hamlet; and, to say the least of his performance, in a just conception of the author, in animation, variety, and energy, he must satisfy the most rigid critic. His deportment in general is easy and graceful, without affectation, but naturally flowing from his feelings. His Romeo also is an admirable specimen of tragic skill. But, with all his merit in tragedy, he seems to be more in his element in comic parts. His Charles in *The School for Scandal* is a performance of great spirit and humor, but perhaps his young Mirabel in *The Inconstant* is his most perfect personation. His Archer in the comedy of *The Beaux' Stratagem* is also highly creditable to his comic powers, and he has shown the versatility of his talents by his performance of Friar Tuck and Falstaff, though so different from his proper cast."

THE DeCAMP AND KEMBLE FAMILIES.

The references to her mother in Mrs. Frances Anne Kemble's recent book, *An Old Woman's Gossip*, lead to the inference that she considers her organization to have more affinity with her maternal than paternal ancestry. She lays much stress upon her mother's originality, describing her as a beautiful woman of many and rare accomplishments and possessed of a vivacious and independent spirit, unwilling to submit to professional tradition or social conventionalisms when at variance with her own sense of good taste and propriety. In the picture the daughter has sketched of the mother she has portrayed many of her own idiosyncrasies. In summing up she affirms that in many respects her mother had more of the savage in her nature than of the ingredients of civilization; by which I infer a leaning to the picturesque side of the gypsy disposition. I was strongly impressed with the native force of character presented in Mrs. Kemble's account of her family career. It was a frank, generous avowal of her opinion of the profession of which her parents were distinguished members, and which enabled her own brilliant and commanding genius to attain celebrity equalled only by that of the greatest actress of the English stage—her aunt, Mrs. Siddons.

Mrs. Kemble tells us her mother was the daughter of Captain DeCamp of the French army—that he was a man of refined manners and cultivated tastes and ability. His wife was

the daughter of a Swiss farmer in the neighborhood of Berne. A victim of consumption, he was compelled to retire from the army and seek a precarious living as a teacher of music and drawing. His life was eventful and brief: a hopeless invalid for several years, he died in London, leaving a widow with a family of three daughters and one son. The eldest daughter, having distinguished herself as a child-actress, was thus provided for. But the poor mother, having no means for educating her other children, applied to Mr. Roger Kemble, the father of the Kemble family and a manager of several provincial theatres, who gave them situations in his company, where they remained until properly prepared to assume regular positions in the profession. Mr. Frederick F. Brown, a young actor of distinguished ability, married one of the sisters, while a third remained single.

VINCENT DECAMP.

Vincent DeCamp, the son, became a versatile actor of great ability. He inherited from his father a chivalric spirit and love of adventure, which, joined to the sterling virtues and amiable disposition derived from his mother, formed the basis of his character, while hardship and the vicissitudes of a wandering life eventually made him an excellent and efficient manager.

Mr. DeCamp married a dowager lady of wealth much older than himself. Gay and reckless, he was a great favorite in the theatrical circles of

Bath, one of the most aristocratic and fashionable provincial towns of England. During his management at Bath he was the boon-companion of many distinguished characters of the heyday period of the Prince Regent (afterward George the Fourth), who was a frequent attendant at the theatre, and to whom the elegant young actor was not personally unknown. Disagreement between himself and wife finally resulted in a separation, and Mr. DeCamp came to the United States and established a circuit of theatres in Charleston and Columbia, South Carolina, and Savannah and Augusta, Georgia. For many years he was prosperous and highly respected. To him I am indebted for the old-English-comedy training I received in the apprentice days of my professional career.

DeCamp's tragedy acting partook of the dignified tone of the Kemble style, while his comedy was of the courteous and sprightly kind, after the manner of Elliston, of which it has been said that it was neither brisk nor languid, but a happy medium between the extremes affected by many leading performers of his day. DeCamp was efficient in almost every department of the drama —could lead an orchestra or take the part in an opera, spoke French and Italian fluently, and danced with elegance; while in fencing he could have maintained his guard against the foil of even an "Admirable Crichton." In private life Mr. DeCamp's deportment was that of a gentleman of somewhat eccentric habits, courteous and even

studiously polite. In person he was above the medium stature, well-made and erect, fine classic features, and a good complexion; in brief, he wore at sixty all the healthy appearance of a man of forty.

MRS. FREDERICK BROWN.

Mrs. Frederick Brown was, like all the DeCamp family, a very marked character. The following quotation from *An Old Woman's Gossip* applies as well to Mrs. Brown as it does to her sister, Mrs. Charles Kemble, for whom the writer intended it: "She joined acuteness of instinct to a general quickness and accuracy of perception and vivid brilliancy of expression that made her conversation delightful—a frank, fearless, generous, and an unworldly woman."

At the time I made the acquaintance of Mrs. Frederick Brown her figure was too spare to be considered a good one; her bearing graceful, though not dignified, being marked with more sprightliness than elegance; but for expression of voice and eye, for unaffected action and charming gayety, I never knew one of her sex who so entirely answered my idea of an original, pleasing, and attractive woman. Mrs. Brown, besides being an accomplished musician, sang the old English opera airs in a sparkling style of exquisite gayety. Later experience in the history of her family led me to recognize in her the same professional qualities so highly extolled in her sister, Mrs. Charles Kemble.

I have stated these circumstances in order to call attention to the fact that the two members of the DeCamp family I have described were endowed with the same brilliant organization which Mrs. Kemble prides herself on having inherited from her mother. There never was a greater instance of hereditary genius or talent than that which marks the descendants of Captain DeCamp and his romantic Swiss wife.

A happy blending of true artistic excellence with natural acting was strikingly apparent in the brilliant effects of Miss Fanny Kemble's dramatic style; and as her mother, who held so distinguished a position on the London stage, was her early instructor, it may be inferred that, although dramatic genius can be hereditary, a high order of success is necessarily the result of *disciplined study* under the directing influence of correct principles, and, more especially, of illustrious example. To this happy combination of native gifts and acquired graces Mrs. Frances Anne Kemble owes her entire supremacy as a stage-artist and a dramatic reader.

THE AUTHOR'S RECEPTION IN COLUMBIA, S. C.

In September, 1830, I was engaged by Mr. John Sefton, the low comedian of Mr. Vincent DeCamp's Southern circuit, as a "walking gentleman." This term is used to designate a character in the drama essential to the progress and development of the plot, but performing what may be termed a merely mechanical part in the

dialogue; that is, one not partaking of the emotional characteristics of the language of the play. For instance, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz in *Hamlet* are types of this class, and in *Macbeth* Donalbain and Lennox. Such parts may be called stepping-stones to higher positions. The young actor who wishes to become acquainted with the details of his profession while playing such parts has ample time to note the action and speech of the higher personages, and their relation to the argument of the drama. It is this kind of experience which enables the careful student to gain a knowledge of the business of the scene and the proper bearing in language and deportment of the heroes of the stage.

After a tedious voyage in a coasting-schooner from Philadelphia to Charleston, South Carolina, and a still more tiresome journey in mail-coaches over sandy and corduroy roads, I arrived at Columbia toward the close of the day, and found myself standing in a crowd of idlers in front of the stage- or post-office. In a few moments I observed a gentleman in a suit of white drilling—jacket and trousers—with white stockings, pumps and ribbons, and a large Panama hat, surveying me attentively through an eye-glass. He finally approached me with a kindly smile, and said in a voice of marked peculiarity, "I presume you are my young recruit from Philadelphia?" I answered in the affirmative, and with an assuring pressure of my hand he bade me welcome, and, after ordering my baggage to a boarding-house, invited

me to go with him to the theatre. Stepping into the middle of the street, he gave a few clucking sounds, accompanied by a snapping of his fingers, and to my astonishment a considerable number of geese, with much flapping of their wings, cackling and hissing, followed the manager and myself up the road to the theatre, which was at least half a mile from the centre of the town. Thus was my entry into the capital signalized by a procession of geese. I am happy to say, however, that none of the sounds peculiar to those birds, and which attracted my attention on that occasion, ever assailed my ears while in the discharge of my professional duties during my sojourn in that city. This phenomenal appearance of the geese must be set down as a consequence of Mr. DeCamp's predilection for country customs, and his having cultivated ground and quite a snug barn adjoining his theatre.

VINCENT DECAMP AS AN ACTOR.

Mr. DeCamp might be termed an imitator, but he certainly was not a mimic. He had a measured, mechanical way of talking, strongly suggestive of melancholy, with a kind of minor-third tone—what might be called a complaining sort of running accompaniment to his conversation, and yet not a whine. The effect of his manner was at times very laughable, especially so when the subject-matter of his speech was of an entirely opposite character.

I remember his saying to me upon a certain occasion, "Come over to my room this evening. We will have a conversation upon some of these points, be merry over a glass of wine and a nut or two, and play a little vingt-et-un. There will be Hardy, Miss Rock, and Mrs. Brown; Essender would come, but his feet are queer; and there will be, too, my never-to-be-sufficiently —— brother-in-law, Mr. Frederick Brown, who, if he is not drunk, is very good company. Come over, and we will have a jolly good time."

He had a remarkable dog, a kind of poodle, whose hair was cut so as to resemble a lion's; that is, it was full and bushy on the shoulders, while the flanks were shaved almost to the skin. He was a very large specimen of the poodle breed, and had a strangely grave, and even sad, expression of eye and face, which was heightened by his long shaggy brows. DeCamp would sometimes put a full-bottomed gray wig and a pair of green spectacles on him, and Tuppence, as he was called, would sit in a chair, looking as grave as a judge, watching his master's motions, strongly suggestive of the appearance of the dog on the title-page of *Punch*, and yet at that period (1831) that magazine of fun was not in existence.

One of the most enjoyable pieces of acting I ever witnessed in the way of burlesque was the travesty of *Hamlet*, as gotten up and played in our company, with DeCamp as the Prince. I have seen much of the same kind of acting since, but never any so gravely funny. Everything was

done soberly, and, while exhibiting the most ridiculous effects, the performers never for a moment showed any evidence of their appreciation of the matter from a comical standpoint. The only way in which burlesque can be made properly effective is for the actor to be in earnest, without appearing to enjoy his own jokes. The humor must be brought out and sustained by a grave decorum in its presentation. DeCamp dressed Hamlet in a black velvet full-skirted coat of Queen Anne's time, with a broad blue ribbon worn over the breast and the Star and Garter, black breeches, silk stockings rolled up over the knee, shoes and buckles, and a full curled wig with long flaps of the time of Charles the Sècond. His action in the burlesque was stilted, and his speech grandiloquent, the syllables keeping time, as it were, to his stately step. With eyes lifted, arms crossed over the breast, frequent sobs and groans, and a constant application of his lace handkerchief to his face, with now and then an unmistakable evidence of a cold in his head, he kept the audience in a constant laugh during his soliloquies and dialogues.

In after years, when recalling the effect of the grotesque extravagance of DeCamp's performance, I perceived that he had given a good idea, judging from the criticisms of the period, of the elder Kemble's manner of acting the melancholy Dane. All the peculiarities of that gentleman's voice, his mode of enunciation, and his action, though rendered highly amusing, were not dis-

torted by bald mimicry, but sketched with the nice touch of one master exaggerating the style of another in a mirth-provoking but friendly spirit.

One of the most touching, and at the same time laughable, pieces of acting I ever saw was DeCamp's performance of Morbleu in the farce of *Monsieur Tonson.* The old French gentleman was driven from his home and possessions by the Revolution, and compelled for a living to become a barber and hair-dresser. This character found in DeCamp a delineator whose nice appreciation of its peculiar traits came from kindred sentiments and sympathy, while his knowledge of the French language enabled him to give a most ludicrous turn to the inverted and perverted forms of expression in which a Frenchman, strange to our English modes of speech, is apt to give utterance to his thoughts. While sensitively alive to the feelings of the old gentleman, he was brimful of the grotesque humor and traditional fun with which the stage-character abounds. His sister, Mrs. Fred. Brown, played Madame Bellegarde, the housekeeper, who had been a fashionable lady in Paris, and became a fellow-refugee when Morbleu fled for his life; and in the farce they used to dance the *minuet de la cour* with all the grace and elegance of French court-manners.

The dramatic style and bearing of this brother and sister, whose lives embraced so much of romantic incident, enjoyment, and privation, were studies for a young histrion, who could not fail to perceive that to the most quaint, extravagant, and

even rude, presentations of character their cultivated manners and tastes gave point and refinement.

DeCAMP AT AN AUCTION.

One day, while walking in the Square in Columbia with Mr. DeCamp, our attention was attracted by a group of persons gathered around an auctioneer, who was displaying a placard which announced the sale of the wood and brick material of an old city. building, before which he was standing. DeCamp, struck by a reference to the cupola of the building as a fine architectural object for a gentleman's grounds, immediately became interested in the matter, and the following dialogue occurred:

DeCamp: "Mr. Auctioneer, will you be kind enough to inform me as to the terms and conditions of this sale?"

Auctioneer: "Certainly, Mr. DeCamp: sixty days' time on an endorsed note, and the materials to be removed in six days from the time of sale."

DeCamp: "Allow me to ask if the cupola is to be sold separately?"

Auctioneer: "Certainly, Mr. DeCamp. It has special value as a distinct and separate part of the building, having been but recently erected."

DeCamp: "Mr. Auctioneer, will you please inform me if it can be removed without injury to the integrity of its structure?"

Auctioneer: "Certainly, Mr. DeCamp. If you procure a careful workman it can be taken down

without the least damage to its beautiful proportions."

DeCamp: "Thank you, sir. I will then consider the propriety of becoming a bidder."

Auctioneer: "Thank you, Mr. DeCamp.—Now, gentlemen, as it is the crowning-point of the building, we will begin with it and work downward in the order of demolition. Gentlemen, what am I offered for the cupola? One hundred dollars? Not one hundred dollars? Why, I thought I was about to start it one hundred below its value! Not one hundred dollars? Then say seventy-five dollars, gentlemen.—Remember, Mr. DeCamp, it can be removed without injuring its beauty as a picturesque object.—Seventy-five dollars? Not seventy-five dollars, gentlemen? What say you, then, to fifty dollars? Where are the lovers of architecture? Where are they? Well, then, give me twenty-five dollars, and it is positively thrown away."

DeCamp: "I will take it at twenty-five, Mr. Auctioneer, if the weathercock goes with it."

Auctioneer: "Yes, Mr. DeCamp, the weathercock, lightning-rod, and cupola.—Did I hear thirty dollars there? Thirty dollars?"

DeCamp: "Yes, Mr. Auctioneer, rather than not have it I'll say thirty."

Auctioneer: "Thank you, Mr. DeCamp: the cupola is your property, sir."

Here DeCamp's friends remarked, "Why, you were bidding against yourself, sir!" to which he replied, "But, you see, the weathercock is an ob-

ject of interest and of additional value. I intend putting the cupola up as a monument to my dear departed Jane, whose body reposes in the garden of my theatre. The weathercock will serve as an indication of the direction of the winds, and at the same time as a reminder of the fickleness of dear Jane's disposition and the inconstancy of the sex in general."

In a few days the cupola was installed in the garden at the side of the theatre, with a plaster cast of Minerva upon a pedestal in the centre of the circle of pillars supporting it. If my readers will refer to the coat-of-arms of the State of Georgia, a good idea may be formed of the appearance of the memento provided by Mr. DeCamp in honor of his dear departed Jane.

CHAPTER XI.

SKETCH OF A GALAXY OF STARS.

THE theatre in Savannah, Georgia, in 1831 was a very dingy building, both inside and out, large and ill-constructed, situated in a part of the city remote from the centre, poorly lighted, and in a neighborhood very liable to an overflow in wet weather, in consequence of which on rainy nights the theatre presented a meagre account of empty benches.

The manager, Mr. DeCamp, was very fond of a game of cards, especially of what was called "vingt-et-un." The playing was always for picayunes, as the old six-and-a-quarter-cent pieces of the North were called "down South," but, as cash was more than frequently at a premium, grains of corn were used instead, which the players always scrupulously redeemed. DeCamp was an excellent player at this game, and the consequence was that when the weekly pay-day came round he was generally lucky enough to hold "counters" against "accounts current" which lightened his payments, while at the same time the players found their pockets somewhat lighter too. The custom, however, was one "more honored in the breach than in the observance."

A SHADOWY PERFORMANCE.

I have a very distinct recollection of a remarkable circumstance that occurred one night during the latter part of the period I have mentioned. The play was *George Barnwell, the London Apprentice*, and the title rôle was assigned to me. The night in question was disagreeable and sloppy, and when the time arrived for raising the curtain the call-boy came into the green-room and called, "First music over, everybody to begin;" whereupon the prompter observed to the manager, "A shy domus, sir" (the technical phrase for a bad house)—"positively empty, sir." Mr. DeCamp replied in his usually cool and seemingly indifferent manner, "Well, Mr. Hardy, let the call-boy watch the front of the house, and tell us when any one comes into the boxes or pit; and if that interesting event does occur, you may begin the play at that point of time. In the mean while the ladies and gentlemen can amuse themselves with a game of vingt-et-un in the green-room, and by way of variety I'll take a hand myself."

As I had passed much of my early youth among Quakers, and had never learned to play cards, I was only a "looker-on in Vienna." The game was not interrupted until the call-boy announced, "Time to ring curtain down on first act, and nobody come yet." I will here state that the prompter's book contains the time-table of each act in every play, that he may be able to ring

in the musicians for their part of the performance between the acts, and after that is over ring up the curtain for the next act. All this was done while the sentry at the peephole of the prompter's box watched for the stragglers to come in. The card-playing went on in the green-room until the time for the close of the second act brought down the curtain again and the music-bell rang in the "fiddlers" once more; after which the curtain rose on the third act to a still empty house. By this time everybody was inclined to disrobe and go home, when, just about the time of the middle of the third act, in bounced the call-boy, crying out, "Two people in the boxes and three in the pit!" at which a rush on our part for the stage took place, and we began the dialogue at about the middle of the third act, and continued the performance through the fourth and fifth acts, when the curtain finally fell to nearly a score of spectators.

My old friends, the managers Sol. Smith and Peter Logan, have related stories about acting to a single spectator, and the following story is a record of an incident that occurred one hundred years ago:

A UNIQUE AUDIENCE.

Mr. Stephen Kemble used to relate the following incident. He said that while he was manager of a theatre at Portsmouth, which was only opened twice or thrice in the week, a sailor applied to him

on one of the nights when there was no performance and entreated him to open the theatre, but was informed that, as the town had not been apprised of the occasion, the manager could not risk the expense. "What will it cost to open the house to-night? for to-morrow I leave the country, and God knows if I shall ever see a play again," said the sailor. Mr. Kemble told him it would be five guineas. "Well," said the careless tar, "I will give it upon this condition—that you will let nobody into the house but myself and the actors." He was then asked what play he would choose. He fixed upon *Richard the Third.* The house was immediately lighted, the rest of the performers attended, and the tar took his station in the front row of the pit. Mr. Kemble performed the part of Richard, the play happening to be what is styled one of the "stock-pieces" of the company. The play was performed throughout, the sailor was very attentive, sometimes laughing and applauding, but frequently on the lookout lest some other auditor might intrude upon his enjoyment. He retired perfectly satisfied, and cordially thanked the manager for his ready compliance. It may seem strange that a sailor, who in general is reputed to be a generous character, should require so selfish an indulgence; but it hardly need be observed that whims and oddities are to be found in all classes of so changeable a being as man.

A ROLAND FOR AN OLIVER.

The Savannah season, disastrous from the start, came to a close in the following manner: The last performance was announced as a special *benefit* for the manager, the usual call for volunteers being paraded. Some liberal patrons of the drama came forward and made an effort to get up a "house" in order to enable DeCamp to take his company out of town in a reputable manner.

I have had to refer to Mr. DeCamp as a gentleman high-spirited and honorable in his dealings, incapable of doing a mean act, though liable to do foolish and inconsiderate things from a lively disposition and a love of fun. The play selected for the closing performance was the *Hypocrite*, the manager being popular in the part of Mawworm. The night, being a stormy one, presented a cheerless appearance, which damped the ardor of all concerned, but more especially affected the size of the long-expected audience. At the time for raising the curtain our manager, feeling disappointed at the melancholy aspect of things, suddenly came to the conclusion not to perform the comedy, considering the matter as more mortifying under the circumstances than a poor house would have been in the usual run of business. He therefore appeared before the curtain and made his determination known, saying, in substance, that he fully appreciated the good feeling manifested by the ladies and gentlemen present, who had come forth in the face of a storm to take

the drama by the hand, but that he confessed his feelings were hurt, inasmuch as he had not received from the people of Savannah—for whose entertainment he had risked his means and employed his best personal efforts—even the degree of patronage they had extended to a lower range of public amusement; and that under the circumstances he felt impelled, while returning his thanks to those present for the kind feeling they had shown, to return their money also, and close the theatre. Some hissed, but the majority applauded his speech. Before the manager left the stage, however, a gentleman spoke from one of the boxes, asking time for a further consideration of the subject; and after a brief consultation with his friends he came behind the scenes and proposed if Mr. DeCamp would proceed with the entertainment and name a sum which he thought would compensate him, that amount would be paid in the morning by the gentlemen who had got up the call for the play. This proposition was acceded to at once, the sum named being two hundred and fifty dollars, the average of "paying houses" in the first week of the season, and accordingly the curtain was raised and the play went on, so to speak, and was "played out."

During the evening my attention was attracted by an unusual stir behind the scenes, or that part of the stage not occupied by the performance of the comedy. The banqueting-tables used in *Macbeth*, with all the gorgeous tinsel and papier-maché splendor of chandelier and candelabra,

were brought out and ranged in order; men carrying parcels, etc. were coming and going through the back stage-door,—all evidently but quietly engaged in preparation for something more than usual.

Mr. DeCamp was famous for his facetious speeches, which I have no doubt were much after the manner of those of the great "before-the-curtain orator," as he was termed, Mr. Elliston, which eccentric gentleman used to deal in extraordinary metaphor and a fireworks style of rhetoric, causing his auditors almost to explode with laughter or moving them to mirthful tears at his burlesque pathos. At the close of the comedy our manager, in obedience to the applause, came before the curtain and in an extravagant "Mawworm" style referred to the state of the drama, complimenting the generosity of his patrons, who were few but select—said that the lack of numbers was fully compensated for by their exceeding liberality; and after setting them in a roar by his witty speech suddenly clapped his hands, at which the curtain rose on a scene not set down in the playbills, the above-mentioned "banquet-tables" being set out with an elegant repast, things solid and things liquid, to which the entire audience, numbering about one hundred, were invited; and, coming round by the door communicating with the stage, the majority (the few ladies who had been present having retired) sat down and enjoyed an entertainment worthy of our manager's good taste.

I must confess to acting the churl on the occasion by going home to reflect upon the fact that I had not received a sufficient salary to keep up with the reasonable expectations of my landlady, who, upon hearing of what had transpired, remarked that "Mr. DeCamp had better thought of his actors' board-bills before he threw away the money they had earned."

It was a clear case of the "Charles Surface" idea. When Old Rowley is about to remonstrate with his extravagant master, that generous profligate replies: "I know what you would say, Rowley: 'Be just before you are generous.' Well, so I would if I could, but I can't for the soul of me keep pace with that old blind, hobbling, beldame Justice; and while I have, by Heaven! I'll give, and so ends the matter."

THE FIRST ROMANTIC ACTOR OF AMERICA.

James Wallack, Sr., was the first actor on the American stage to exhibit great excellence in the highest forms of the tragic and comic drama and in modern productions of the heroic, domestic, and romantic order. Five distinct and strongly-marked characters—Rolla, Martin Heywood in the *Rent Day*, Alessandro Mazzaroni in *The Brigand*, Don Cæsar de Bazan, and Dick Dashall in the farce of *My Aunt*—found in that gentleman a presentation of character that left nothing wanting on the score of lifelike portraiture and picturesque effect. That rare combination, fine

person, handsome features, distinguished manners, and thorough dramatic training based on intellectual culture, was the pedestal on which the elder Wallack stood, a statuesque representative of the "expressed and admirable in form and feature"—of what Charles Dickens termed "the romantic school of acting." It will be remembered that when Charles Fechter first came to this country publicity was given to the endorsement which the great novelist gave the distinguished actor as the legitimate expositor of dramatic romance.

It must not be understood that in claiming for Mr. Wallack the honors of the "romantic school" I mean thereby to deny his claims to a first rank in what is called legitimate tragedy and comedy, in which he acted for nearly half a century, "standing the push of all comparison" with the brightest of the English stars—those luminaries which shone and vanished before his talented son, Lester Wallack, achieved the professional honor of perpetuating the managerial genius of his father and maintaining the standard of dramatic excellence that has made the name of Wallack famous in England and America.

THE WALLACKS, OLD AND YOUNG.

There were two brothers, James and Henry Wallack. The latter, a most excellent and popular actor, confined himself entirely to the duties of a stage-manager and stock actor, while his

elder brother, James, played only "star" engagements.

James W. Wallack, the son of Henry, appeared upon the stage during his uncle's absence in England, and after a period of stock-acting had won his way to a "star" position. He was well known and deservedly popular in many cities of the Union. In the profession he was familiarly called "Jim," in order to distinguish him from his uncle James and cousin Lester, the son of James Wallack.

After a prolonged absence, the last-named gentleman had returned to this country, and was performing his usual round of engagements, in the course of which he appeared in Philadelphia for a few nights at the old Chestnut Street Theatre, the scene of so many of his early triumphs. On account of a general depression in business-matters the theatres were almost deserted, and consequently Mr. Wallack's opening performance was but poorly attended. Calling upon him in his dressing-room, I found him much dispirited, and I stated what I knew to be the cause of so unsatisfactory a house. He replied, "Oh yes, oh yes, I know that; but, you see, when young men of your own name come forward, the *individuality* of a reputation is destroyed. The people think it's *Jim*, sir, and not *the* Wallack!"

A short time after he laid the foundation of his theatre in New York, where he achieved an exceptional success as manager, while he renewed his old career of professional triumphs as an

actor; all of which he lived to enjoy to a ripe old age. His exit from the stage of life brought the curtain down upon a career as brilliant as any recorded in the annals of the drama.

MR. TYRONE POWER THE IRISH ACTOR, AND WILLIAM E. BURTON THE ENGLISH COMEDIAN.

Without any injustice to Mr. Power, it may be said that in genteel comedy, when representing gentlemanly characters, he was at times somewhat exuberant in manner, if not rather too free; but at the same time it must be admitted that in his portraiture of low Irish character the spirit of the gentleman always peeped through the well-acted roughness of the boorish parts he performed. The same in kind, but differing in degree (no matter what he was acting), was a certain brusqueness in speech, a kind of jauntiness in his bearing, with a quizzical cast of the eye quite roguish in expression, but not at all repulsive. Shakespeare makes Falstaff say of Prince Hal that he had "a villainous trick of the eye." Now, we must confess that although Mr. Power was never guilty of such vulgarity as the giving of a downright wink, still it may be affirmed that, after the manner of some tragedians, he made a very effective use of his visual organs, and had indeed a familiar "trick of the eye." In illustration of my meaning I will refer to a passage in the writings of Charles Dickens, who says of one of his characters, "Something remotely resem-

bling a wink quivered for a moment in the right-hand corner of his left eye."

In short, there was a peculiar archness in Mr. Power's acting, an unaffected gayety of manner, which arrested at once the attention of the auditor and claimed his lively sympathies. In all the parts he acted, from the gentleman down to the smart servant, he exhibited an entire abandonment to the spirit of the scene. He was always in earnest and up to all the requirements of the part. Of all the laughers of the stage—and there have been many who were famous for this power, and for the faculty of exciting laughter in others—I have never heard one whose laugh was so natural and unaffected as his. It was the rich, joyous outpouring of a mirth-loving nature. It was not only contagious, but, better still, it never left in the mind of the auditor the least reflection that its indulgence had been at the expense of propriety or good taste. Mr. Power had a keen perception of the ridiculous, with an exquisite relish for wit and humor. The audience fully enjoyed his jokes, because they sympathized with the merriment of the actor and were carried away by the irresistible flow of fun.

The very opposite of this legitimate effect in comedy acting was apparent in the broad humor of the low comedian, Mr. William E. Burton. He winked his eye at the audience without reserve, and wriggled and grimaced in order to give full force to an objectionable expression, rolling the precious morsel under his tongue, and actually

smacking his lips, as it were, with unction at a questionable joke, until what the author may have barely touched with the pencil of conceit the coarseness of the actor painted with a copious daubing of unmistakable grossness.

The suggestive and positive qualities of these performers in the way of giving point to the language and situation of the scene may be illustrated by an incident that produced an extraordinary effect during the performance of a farce in the old Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, in which Mr. Burton played a prominent part, and Mr. Power was acting one of the rollicking characters in which he was remarkable for the liberties he took with the text by the introduction of his own jokes, making fun, as Hood would say, "on his own hook." Mr. Burton on the occasion referred to was dressed to represent a big boy just home from school for the holidays—a hobble-de-hoy sort of fellow, whom the comedian had seen fit to "make up," after his usually extravagant manner, in a suit of nankeen, jacket and trousers, styled by the English "button-overs," and worn by school-boys not yet in their teens. The nether garments were rather short and very tightly fitted to the person, and shoes and striped stockings, with a large straw hat, completed the *tout ensemble.* Burton was jealous of Mr. Power's great popularity, and did not like to act in his pieces, which will account for his apparent determination to share the honors of the laugh—if not by language and situation, at all events by absurd-

ity in manner and dress. Power was evidently nettled by the obtrusion of these objectionable low-comedy features, and gave his fellow-actor a "Roland for his Oliver" in the following manner:

Burton, as Master Tom, was frisking about the stage with his usual wriggle, while Power—who in his capacity of waiter, had just handed a cup of coffee to one of the characters—was standing by with the salver in his hand. At that moment Burton passed in front of him, and Power, by a back-handed blow, brought the salver with a spanking bang across the most prominent part of the comedian's person, accompanying the action with, "Get tails to your coat, Tom, when you're in company!" The smack sounded like the explosion of a torpedo, and the astonished comedian, uttering an exclamation, sprang after his assailant, who, dodging behind the characters on the stage, slipped off at the wings and left Master Tom to make the most of the situation, which the audience was enjoying to the full.

I question whether Burton, with all his trickery, ever made so decided a hit as Power did in this striking impression of stage-tactics.

THE VETERAN FAVORITE OF PHILADELPHIA.

Mr. William B. Wood was one of Philadelphia's most esteemed and admired actors, and for years a successful manager of "Old Drury," as the Chestnut Street Theatre was always called by its frequenters in the palmy days of the drama. He

was a great stickler for the proprieties of the drama and the decorum of stage-conduct, rigidly exact in everything relating to the business of the scene, and letter perfect in the language of his author. At the time Mr. Power played his last engagement in Philadelphia, Mr. Wood was about to retire from the stage.

Belcour in the old English comedy of *The West Indian* was one of his parts, and one in which he was deservedly popular with all the old playgoers; and as some friends of Mr. Power had expressed a desire to see him in the character of Major O'Flaherty, an old-school Irish gentleman, it was arranged that he should appear as the Major, Mr. Wood as Belcour, and I as Charles Dudley. On the occasion of the performance Mr. Power was anxious to "get through," as the theatrical phrase is, in time for an evening-party. Indeed, he was not very fond of the part of Major O'Flaherty, as it was not the focal point of interest in the play nor adapted to the purposes of a bright particular "star." The house was not as good as usual, and altogether matters were not very satisfactory to actor or auditors. In fact, the audience appeared to be waiting for Mr. Power to take possession of the scene with his usual spirit, for the admirers of this hilarious gentleman had become quite infatuated with his sprightly wit and sparkling humor in the busy incidents of the modern drama, petite comedy, and rollicking farce, where the "Irish star" so far outshone the lesser luminaries of the stage.

On this occasion, it must be admitted in justice to Mr. Power, more than usual prosiness had made the performance somewhat dull, and therefore his impatient desire for its conclusion was, in a certain sense, excusable. Mr. Wood, by reason of not having played Belcour for many years, was more than usually nervous, uncertain in his words, and slow in his movements—a condition of things which was not in any wise improved by Major O'Flaherty, who constantly interlarded his speeches with whispered injunctions to the players to be "lively and hurry up," which not unfrequently reached the ear of Mr. Wood. In the scene between Charles Dudley and Belcour swords are drawn and an angry altercation takes place. Here (without waiting for the dialogue), as soon as the swords were drawn, at which a lady screams, and while Belcour was speaking, to the astonishment of all parties the centre doors flew open, and in burst the irrepressible Major with, "Death and confusion! what's all this uproar for?" Then, dashing through the scene with a perfect rattle, he hurried Miss Dudley and myself off the stage, leaving poor Belcour to take care of himself.

Mr. Wood was highly indignant at the treatment he had received, but Mr. Power laughed and turned the whole matter into a joke, saying the people in front were all going to sleep, and the only way to wake them up was to take Young Rapid's advice to "push along and keep moving." "This," continued the vivacious, laughter-loving

Irishman, "is a stupid old play, and the sooner the little fun in it is stirred up the better it will be for all behind and before the curtain."

As the play went on the very spirit of unrest and mischief seemed to have taken possession of the volatile son of Comus, for wherever he could dash into a scene with the slightest chance of "cutting it short" he brought long dialogues to a close, and anticipated matters so admirably with an improvised speech here and there that the performers and audience seemed to have caught the infection, and the curtain fell in the midst of anything but a state of somnolency, while Mr. Wood retired to his dressing-room to mourn over the sad fate of the old school of comedy.

The whole performance was a lamentable evidence of the fact that comedy of *The-School-for-Scandal* order, with its brilliant language, its wit, repartee, and sentiment, had undergone an eclipse, and must succumb to the powerful influence of a dramatic style in which the author merely outlines the subject, which the genius of the actor fills up by subordinating the language to his powers of expression. It may not be too much to say that Mr. Power in his effervescing and exuberant style of interpreting wit and humor was at once both author and actor. Hence in the legitimate walks of comedy, where language is of paramount importance, Mr. Power could not rise to the standard he readily attained when action and situation were independent of the merit of the language. May not this be fairly attributable to the taste of

the public, and not laid to the charge of the performer?

BURTON CRITICISED BY POWER.

One night, after the play in which Mr. Power and I had been engaged, we remained at the wing to take a look at Burton, then acting in the farce. Power had known our popular comedian in the English theatres, and did not consider him an original actor. Struck by some point, he suddenly exclaimed, "By George! look at that! Why, he has stolen old Wright's thunder, and is playing it off here as his own!" As we turned to leave he observed, "This man's acting is made up of all the prominent features of our London celebrities, and he is as much like Jack Reeves as Jack himself." Some time after this incident Mr. Reeves, a great London favorite, came to America, and was charged by our critics with imitating Burton.

I remember that many years afterward, while witnessing a performance at the Adelphi Theatre, London, I was very much struck with the manner of an actor who was performing a low-comedy old man. I could not divest myself of the idea that it was Burton: the figure, kind of voice, its tricks of transition from brisk and high to heavy and low, the mode of action, everything, was as like our great comedian as though the actor before me was his reflex in a glass. I looked at the bill, and lo! there was the Mr. Wright that Power had charged Burton with copying a score of years

before. Nobody could mistake that personality, or fail to see the exact resemblance of it in Mr. Burton's stage manner of voice and gesture in his performance of certain characters.

POWER BESTOWS A MEDAL AND MAKES HIS EXIT.

I last saw Mr. Power in the stage-entrance of the Chestnut Street Theatre. I had played with him in the first piece, which was over, and I was about going on the scene in the afterpiece. He had resumed his citizen's dress, and was leaving the theatre. The performance of the evening was for his benefit, and he was to go to New York the next morning. In one of the plays in which we acted together very often—*Frederick the Great of Prussia*—in return for a gallant act by which Major O'Shaughnessy (the part played by Power) saves his life, the king bestows a royal medal on his preserver. The traditional manner of Frederick in bestowing the honor is quaint, quick, and sharp: "Kneel, major! Wear this as a token of regard from your sovereign;" at the same time taking the order from his own breast, and with a sudden snap of the fingers fastening it on the lapel of the major's uniform. The order which in the run of the drama was so often bestowed on the Major (Mr. Power) was a very fine imitation of the original decoration. As Mr. Power approached me to take his hasty leave he said, "When this you see, remember me," pinning the medal, with the peculiar curt manner of the old

king, on my breast; then, pressing my hand warmly and raising his hat in true military style, he said, "Adieu, mon capitaine!" The next moment he was gone, and I was on the stage engaged in the business of the scene. After a farewell at New York the light-hearted comedian took his departure for Liverpool on board the ill-fated steamer President, sharing the mysterious doom which awaited that noble ship, her passengers, and her crew.

CHAPTER XII.

MISS CUSHMAN, AND HER EARLY STUDIES.

ABOUT 1835, during a period in which my health interfered with my regular professional duties, I made a visit to New Orleans. I had, while playing subordinate parts to Mr. James Wallack, gained the good opinion of that highly-accomplished actor, and received from him letters recommending me for a position in the St. Charles Theatre, then open for the first season under the management of its owner, Mr. James H. Caldwell.

I found Mr. Caldwell an exceedingly polite gentleman of old-school manners. He read Mr. Wallack's letters, and said they were a sufficient guarantee of my ability to fill the position he had kept open for me, and that my salary would be sixty dollars per week and a half benefit. When I was first ushered into his room I found him standing at a buffet taking his breakfast of coffee and toast. Our conversation did not occupy more than twenty minutes; while waiting, at his request, to take a look at the theatre, which I had not yet seen, a number of persons called on business appertaining to his official duties as mayor of the city, president of the gas company, and officer of an

extensive land company, the latter being for the reclaiming of swampy grounds within the limits of the city; all of which offices he filled in addition to the management of one of the largest and most prosperous theatres in the United States.

During my stay in New Orleans I had the pleasure of performing frequently with two of the most distinguished ladies of the profession. Mrs. James G. Maeder (formerly Miss Clara Fisher) was one of the bright stars of the theatrical firmament, whose acting as a child of twelve or thirteen in *Richard the Third* and as representative of various juvenile characters, often appearing in four to five parts in the same piece, had brought her fame and fortune. She was no less remarkable for her performance in high comedy and in light characters in English opera. The other lady to whom I have referred was Miss Louisa Lane (afterward Mrs. John Drew), another prodigy of the profession, who also acted in her childhood character parts of the same rôle as Miss Fisher, and a charming actress and a great favorite. Both these ladies have been, and continue to be, ornaments to the profession and representative women of the highest order.

It was during my visit to New Orleans also that I became acquainted with Miss Charlotte Cushman, who had made her first appearance in Boston, her native city, in opera. She was a pupil of my esteemed friend, Mr. James G. Maeder, the celebrated professor and teacher of vocal music, and made a "hit" in her début, and through

the influence of Mr. Maeder was engaged to lead the opera business in the St. Charles Theatre, of which he was musical director. I met her at the house of Mr. Maeder, who acted as her guardian while she pursued her musical studies, her friends in Boston being satisfied that she would enjoy great advantages in an association with Mrs. Maeder, a lady of refined manners and irreproachable character.

Being much in the society of the Maeders, I frequently met, and had ample opportunity for becoming acquainted with, the young opera-singer, and for observing her disposition both off and on the stage. The first time I saw her professionally was in the character of Patrick in the operatic farce of the *Poor Soldier*. Miss Cushman, in the proper costume of her sex in private life, appeared self-reliant and of easy and agreeable manners, but in her soldier dress on the stage she challenged attention and asserted a power which impressed the beholder with an idea of fixed and determined purpose. Many years' acquaintance with Miss Cushman in public and in private life only confirmed the early impression made upon me by this great American actress.

The St. Charles was one of the largest buildings of the kind in the United States, and the powers of a speaker or singer were taxed to the utmost for the production of the best vocal effects; and in consequence of the vigor of Miss Cushman's efforts to carry the citadel by storm, rather than by cautious approaches, in a short

time she broke down her voice and destroyed her prospects as a singer. Her instructor had frequently warned her against the folly of attempting the accomplishment of what was not within the legitimate limits of her vocal powers; he had cautioned her against her tendency to undue force of expression, as calculated to produce throaty tones injurious to the voice. "But," said Mr. Maeder, "the young lady knew better than her teacher; she was almost insane on the subject of display and effect, and altogether too demonstrative in the way of commanding what is only to be obtained slowly and patiently—operatic success." Thus Miss Cushman, disregarding the injunction of an experienced and thoroughly-trained master of music, by her impatience of restraint ruined a fine voice, destroying all hope of operatic honors, and was compelled to turn her attention to the drama.

In our company at the St. Charles was an actor of the old school, a gentleman of excellent qualities both as a scholar and tragedian. He was a man of retiring disposition and studious habits, well versed in the traditions of the stage, and an admirer of the Kemble style of acting. He was very much such an actor as Charles Young of the London stage, who was thought by some critics to occupy a middle place between Kemble and Kean, with much of the excellence of both these great performers, while others considered his style original, natural, and artistic, and in dramatic power equal to either of them.

Mr. Barton, the gentleman to whom I allude, was stage-manager—a position for which he was peculiarly qualified by a familiar practical acquaintance with the business of acting, and consequently able to direct the action of those who carried on the plot of the play; an accomplishment, by the way, rarely to be met with in these later days. Miss Cushman, who was now turning her attention to the dramatic form of delineation, found in Mr. Barton an excellent instructor, and began a course of study to fit her for the change she had determined to make. Her voice had become husky and hard from overstrained efforts in singing, and, fulfilling the prediction of Mr. Maeder, had lost the pure quality of its tone.

The correctness of this opinion was fully sustained also by subsequent events. There was always in Miss Cushman's vocal effects a quality of aspiration and a woody or veiled tone more becoming the expression of wilful passion suppressed and restrained than that emotion which seeks a sympathetic recognition of outspoken vocality, pure, ringing, and elastic—the former being Nature's mode of utterance for the evil passions, while the latter speaks of the noble, pure, and bright. At the close of the season Mr. Barton, observing a marked improvement in his pupil, apparent in her expression of the parts she had studied and sustained under his instruction, finally cast the young actress for Lady Macbeth.

The histrionic ability of Mr. Barton, his familiar acquaintance with the stage-manners of many

leading actresses, and particularly with the readings and business-performance of Mrs. Siddons as the consort of the guilty thane, enabled him successfully to prepare his pupil for her arduous task. The tragedy was performed for the benefit of Mr. Barton, and the result was a brilliant audience and a complete triumph for Miss Cushman, whose Lady Macbeth was pronounced a great success. At the close of the season Miss Cushman came North, where she gradually won her way by unremitting toil and good management (both within and without the theatre) to a popular position. When Mr. Macready came to this country to perform his round of characters and take leave of the American stage, Miss Cushman supported him in many leading parts; and here was the turning-point of her theatrical fortunes, as well as the culmination of her dramatic studies, for the result of her professional relations with the tragedian led to her English engagements, as well as to a most determined imitation of his peculiar mode of acting. Both Mr. Macready and Mr. Barton were of the same school, as it is called, and Miss Cushman fell into the habits of articulation and enunciation of Mr. Macready with greater readiness because of her previous studies with Barton. Neither of these gentlemen was remarkable for clear vocality, but, on the contrary, spoke from the throat more frequently than, to use a figurative expression of questionable correctness, from the forward parts of the mouth. The stage bearing and action of both gentlemen were of marked

peculiarity, and it is not strange that, under the circumstances, Miss Cushman should have followed the style of two such distinguished exemplars of dramatic art. Miss Cushman was by nature and education a lover of place and position, of "the ribbon and star." To a determined disposition to make the most of social advantages she added a fine tact in the management of people whom she considered necessary to her personal interests or professional advancement. Indeed, it may be said that, without being a female Richelieu, she approached in a measure the qualities of quick perception which enabled the wily cardinal to bend things in the right direction, but in no way approximated the sterner attributes of the profound politician, who, it is said, "when the twig would not bend, did not hesitate to lop off the offending limb."

To be known in society, to possess and wield an influence, were the constant aims of this most ambitious and gifted actress. I remember one day, when calling on her in New York just after her arrival from Europe, and within a day or two of her appearance in public, she asked me upon whom I called in the city. I replied that I did not make calls. She exclaimed, "Why, you astonish me! Look there!" pointing to a well-filled card-stand: "I have all those to return, though I have been busy at it ever since my arrival. One cannot be too careful of popular interest." Her fondness for society was insatiable, and wealth had no more devoted worshipper. Miss Cush-

man's style of acting, while it lacked imagination, possessed in a remarkable degree the elements of force: she grasped the intellectual body of the poet's conception without mastering its more subtle spirit; she caught the facts of a character, but its conceits were beyond her reach. Her understanding was never at fault; it was keen and penetrating. But that glow of feeling which springs from the centre of emotional elements was not a prominent constituent of her organization. She was intensely prosaic, definitely practical, and hence her perfect identity with what may be termed the materialism of Lady Macbeth, and the still more fierce personality of that dramatic nondescript, Meg Merrilies, neither of which characters was of "imagination all compact," but rather of imperious wilfulness. In relation to this tendency in actors to make their impersonations of character strictly natural, let us consider the following lines of Lady Macbeth:

> I have given suck, and know
> How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
> I would, while it was smiling in my face
> Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums,
> And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
> Have done to this.

Lady Macbeth by this declaration means, in other words, to say, "My will is so stern and unyielding that if I had sworn to a certain deed, no matter how much at variance with my nature, I have the nerve at whatever sacrifice to do it."

Now, as the taking of the life of an infant by its own mother would be the most extreme act of cruelty a woman could be capable of performing, the over-excited mind of Lady Macbeth uses it as an illustration of her capacity for determined action.

But let us look at the actual deeds of this self-proclaimed and prospective murderess, as contrasted with the threatenings of the valor of her tongue. Picture her for a moment standing by the bedside of the sleeping Duncan with the dagger raised to strike the deadly blow; then behold her fleeing from the chamber, "cowed" by "the better part" of her nature, exclaiming, "Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done it." Here is a touch of womanly character that speaks for itself, and shows Lady Macbeth as not all "unsexed." The poet has drawn a towering nature elevated to the sublime heights of a dazzling ambition—a lofty conception of wickedness plotting for the acquisition of a crown, to be struck from the brow of a sleeping king by the assassin's blow.

The grandeur of a poetic idea elevates the deed of blood, without divesting it of its horrors, above the repulsiveness of a commonplace murder. This is the poetic license. The heroine of the poet invokes the pall of darkness to hide the wound made by the bloody knife, while the heroine of the stage by a violent and inartistic manner plucks away "the blanket of the night" to show the dreadful deed in all its hideous deform-

ity, exhibiting the coarse features and harsh voice of the heroine of a melodrama, who stands ready to hold the candle to the midnight murderer whose object is the purse of a weary traveller. Thus is one of Shakespeare's grandest dramatic conceptions dragged down to the lowest level of a mere sensational exhibition.

I cannot forbear to remark upon the fact ("more in sorrow than in anger") that the manner of the stage Lady Macbeth is frequently so fiercely violent that it is enough to induce the spectator to feel that Shakespeare's heroine is not only fully capable of killing her own infant at sight, but if occasion offered could perpetrate by her own unaided efforts another general "slaughter of the innocents," merely for the gratification of an insatiate thirst for blood.

MURPHY'S STORY: DAMON AND PYTHIAS.

I will here relate one of those strange theatrical incidents by which both actor and auditor are sometimes suddenly precipitated from the very pinnacle of tragic elevation to the uttermost depths of comic perplexity.

Many years ago in Dublin there was a musical genius who "got up" the operas for Bunn, the celebrated English manager. While an opera was in course of preparation Mr. Brown (as I shall call him), a great London star, was engaged to play a few nights in tragedy. The manager was in a strait for members to fill up the small

parts, only the principal performers coming over from London; and my young Irish friend, the genius to whom I have alluded, being up to everything in the way of fun, agreed to "go on," as it is said, for some of the small characters, when necessary, to oblige his friend Mr. Bunn; and now I shall proceed to tell the story as he told it to me:

"The part in question was Lucullus, the gentleman in *Damon and Pythias*. That's the man that kills the horse, you know. Well, the young gentleman who was cast for the part got sick—bad luck to him for that same!—and at a moment's notice I was summoned from the music-room to 'go on' for Lucullus. Mr. Brown wasn't exactly the man to take things aisy, he being a great gun, and I found him roaming about at large, pretty much as you might imagine a huge mastiff would that had lost his bone. Well, the tragedian looked at me and said, 'You're Mr. Murphy, are you?'—'Yes,' sez I, 'I am that same.'—'You're not the biggest man I ever saw.'—'No, sir,' sez I, 'but, you see, I'm an Irishman, and may make up in pluck what I lack in flesh.'—'Yes,' says he, 'but the part you are to play is not a plucky one, as you are pleased to say: Lucullus is rather a timid gentleman, but a kind-hearted one, and, as you are so good as to help us in this emergency, so far the part will be suited.'—'Thank you, sir,' sez I.

"The rehearsal went on. I read the part, and when we came to the scene where Lucullus tells

Damon how he killed his horse, Mr. Brown went over the business of the scene for me; he showed me how I was to stand, and how I was to kneel, and all about it, you know. Well, he picked me up at the right time from my knees, and gently landed me on the other side of the stage with a bump that made me think all the lamps were lighted, and a full head of gas on at that. 'I beg your pardon,' sez he; 'you're lighter than I thought you were.'—'Yes, sir,' sez I; 'and bedad! you are a good deal stronger than I thought you were.'—'Well,' sez he, 'Mr. Murphy, you will oblige me and serve yourself if you will tie a twisted handkerchief around your body just under your arms, with the knot in front resting on your breast beneath the folds of your tunic.'—'And what,' sez I, 'will I do that for?'—'Why, sir,' sez he (and I thought he said it with a sardonic smile)—'why, then, you see, when I clutch you in my fury I shall have something to hold on to stronger than the slight stuff of your dress; for I have known cases where the tunic wasn't strong, and it gave way in my clutch, and Lucullus was somewhat hurt.'—'Hurt?' sez I.—'Yes,' sez he; 'that is, was slightly frightened, maybe, more than hurt.'

"In this stage of the proceedings I made up my mind to trust to Providence and my lucky stars, that had often got me out of scrapes, but with this reservation—that if I escaped death at the hands of an infuriated tragedian this time, I would never tempt my fate again, outside of the dangers and perils of an opera at all events.

"I went home, read over the play, and got ready for the night. Well, seven o'clock came, and ten o'clock came too, as it always does, no matter what troubles or shortcomings may lie between the rising of the curtain and its falling, which generally makes all things even. But, bedad! I don't think my score was ever settled for that night, and if it was, the host must have paid the reckoning himself and counted me out.

"Well, my story has an end, though you may think as the Irishman did when he said to the captain, after pulling a long while at the sea-line, 'Be jabers! I think somebody must have cut off the end of the rope.'—Well, here's the end of my story.

"I got along pretty well till the scene where I have to tell him about the horse, and then—holy St. Francis!—what did I do? 'My horse! my horse!' sez he—'where's my horse?'—'I have killed him,' sez I, and then came a yell as if something hard had dropped on Damon's head. I looked up, and such a face I never saw outside of a menagerie. His hands were up above his head, his mouth frothing, and his eyes rolling. My heart was beating so thick and fast I thought it must burst the knotted band that was tightening over my chest. 'I am standing here,' sez Damon, 'to see if the great gods will execute my vengeance.' I looked up at him, and felt that my hash would soon be settled; so, not waiting for what I felt would be instant death, I slipped gently off the stage and ran down under it, where they

keep the stage-properties all jumbled up in the dark, and quietly hid myself in an old Tom-and-Jerry watch-box that stood conveniently open.

"Well, now, I know you'll ask me how Damon got out of the scrape I had got him into, but, as the man says in the play, 'If you want to make me your bosom friend don't puzzle me.' All that I saw after that was only what I heard. First came the prompter's voice calling out, 'Lucullus! Lucullus!' while the people were thumping and howling away like mad. 'Lucullus! where in the devil's name are you? Damon is waiting for you, and storming like a fury.'—'I have no doubt he is,' sez I to myself. 'I would do just that same thing if I was Damon and somebody else Lucullus. But if I stir out of this till I'm hungry, the devil himself may get my supper.' And I didn't. I heard a great rumpus over my head on the stage, but it soon died out, and I was left in the dark.

"I leave you to imagine how that scene came to a close. All I have to say is, that it wasn't finished after the manner set down in the prompter's book. But one thing you may depend upon: Mr. Murphy was never called upon to 'go on' for any parts, large or small, where Mr. Brown or any other strong-muscled tragedian was concerned."

AN "OLD KENTUCKY HOME."

In Louisville, Kentucky, about 1859, one night, after playing Charles De Moor in *The Robbers*, I

was passing out at the stage-door wrapped in a heavy military mantle or cloak, which I usually wore in De Moor, when I was accosted with, "All right, old fellow! You're engaged now for a performance at Owl's Nest; you're wanted, and must come." Knowing the hearty Kentucky attributes of my friend Richard Rousseau, a limb of the law, whose kindly hand was on my shoulder, I felt how impossible it would be to dissent from what I at once perceived it was his determination to carry out then and there—a long-threatened midnight raid on the inhabitants of the old-fashioned country residence and farming establishment of the widow of Judge Estelle, situated in a charming rural district known as "Peewee Valley," about sixteen or eighteen miles from Louisville. My not very decided objections on the score of non-preparedness, unbecoming costume, etc. were met with, "There's a buggy, and a horse that's not afraid of work, and can do any amount of it, and, what's better, can see his way over the darkest and dirtiest roads that are to be found in Kentucky. Now," said he, "in conclusion, and in the words of a judge not remarkable for elegant language, 'If this court knows herself—and she thinks she do'—you're bound to take that seat and the attending consequences." So saying, he helped me up, took the reins, and off we dashed for an owl's visit to Owl's Nest.

The horse went along at a gait which clearly showed that he had not been doing anything to tire him for some time. A clear star-lit midnight,

with the bracing atmosphere of a closing autumn, together with an intelligent, good-natured friend fond of talking "theatre," Shakespeare, and Schiller, loving good things in general, and somewhat inclined to the romantic side of life, and in addition to all these surroundings a good cigar,—made us enjoy the ride to the "top of our bent." We had "done up" about half our journey when, in passing through a piece of woods, the horse, without any apparent cause, suddenly reared and made a leap, and lo! we found ourselves thrown against the dasher, very much mixed up and dreadfully shaken. The horse was on his feet, however, and kicking furiously in the middle of a pile of brush, the front wheels of the buggy being on one side of the trunk of a fallen tree, while the hind wheels were on the other. Reasons why and wherefore as follows: The road was not a common thoroughfare, but a "short cut" through a plantation; the negroes had felled a tree, and, as it was Saturday and the evening had come on before they had finished their work, they had left the tree where it had fallen. We soon managed to extricate the vehicle and tie up the harness, and after overhauling our cargo of fresh fish, claret, champagne, and sundry other grocery items, which we happily found in nowise injured, we continued on our way—if not rejoicing, at least thankful that things were no worse.

Arriving at Owl's Nest between the first and second crow of the cock, our advent caused a sudden rise from the horizontal to the perpendic-

ular among the servants of the family as well as the outside workers, but the event was hailed by all hands a "jubelification." I must state here, as some excuse for the liberties we were taking, that I had the pleasure of being upon intimate terms with the family, while Massa Dick—as Mr. Rousseau was called by the whole working population of Owl's Nest—was looked upon as though he owned everything, from the front gate to the back yard, stock, root, and branch, and the family, white and black, included.

Early sunrise found the inmates up and moving in the direction of a good breakfast, which was soon served and presided over by our hostess, from whom, in spite of our irregular proceedings, we received a hearty welcome. After a pleasant chat with Madam Estelle and the ladies of the family we took a ramble over the country, which was remarkable for its picturesque beauty in hill, dale, wood, and water. In approaching the house on our return through a shady avenue, one could not but be struck with the natural beauty of Owl's Nest. It was a wooden structure, and in what 'Zekiel Homespun calls "a rather tumblish-down condition." It stood in the midst of a venerable grove of locust trees, whose extending branches surrounded and swept over the roof, breaking up the sharp angles of its gables and dormer-windows, while the huge, unshapely mass of bricks which formed the chimneys, together with much of the old weatherboarding, were hidden or obscured by the luxuriant growth of an

immense Virginia creeper. This, with the pendent limbs of the trees, gave to the rude aspect of things a most striking and pleasing effect. The large parlor or general family-room was of the plainest form and finish, with low ceiling and a grand old-fashioned fireplace, where, on the grotesque irons, blazed a pile of cordwood logs.

Amid the simple but attractive features of life belonging to the region I have described could be found, not more than a quarter of a century ago, a condition of slave-labor which seemed to bring solid comfort, and even rustic happiness, to many a sable tiller of the soil who by the sweat of his brow earned the bread of the common household. And here I cannot refrain from an expression of the admiration I felt for the character and personal graces of Madam Estelle, or, as the dusky members of the family in their simple familiarity called her, "the old mistress." She was the widow of Judge Estelle, and, like her husband, was born in Virginia. The judge was a man of scholarly attainments in addition to his legal knowledge; he resided at one time, and during the administration of John Quincy Adams, in Washington, D. C., where his wife was noted for her intellectual culture and brilliant conversational powers, holding a distinguished position among the ladies who graced the circle of fashionable society in the Capitol City. At the time of my visit she was about sixty years of age, with regular features, a fine fresh complexion, brilliant eyes, and a placid smile whose sweetness won its way directly to the

heart. But the crowning point which gave to a queenly person a matronly grace was a head of perfectly white hair, cropped short behind, and worn in front in the style called Pompadour. I remember with pleasure the impression this elegant lady made upon me when I first saw her sitting in the dress-circle of the Louisville theatre, where, amid a throng of the rarest of Kentucky beauties, she was conspicuous for "inborn dignity and native grace."

The morning walk to which I referred before making this digression being over, a comfortable nap put us into a good condition for the full enjoyment of a substantial farm-dinner. The "fatted calf" and the inevitable Southern standby, jowl-and-greens, formed a solid foundation for the more unsubstantial contents of the hamper which my considerate companion had provided to meet any possible deficiencies in the larder where visitors were not expected.

Rising "like giants refreshed" from the festive board, where beauty, grace, and hospitality presided, we were soon upon our "winding way," and finally safe home at the Galt House in Louisville.

CHAPTER XIII.

DIFFERENCES IN THE EARLY TRAINING OF TWO GREAT TRAGEDIANS, WILLIAM MACREADY AND EDWIN FORREST.

THERE are few things more interesting or more instructive than the history of artistic genius, its development, struggles, and achievements. In its application to dramatic performance it must be in a great measure moulded by self-culture and experience, whether its professor is so fortunate as to enjoy great advantages and opportunities or condemned to contend with difficulties and toil on, unaided by suggestive models and inspiring occasions.

The young actor may be a metropolitan, or he may be a provincial performer subjected to all the privations and disadvantages to be encountered by a member of a strolling company. But in either case to become eminent in his profession he must be original and self-educated. He must use his own powers, his own eyes, and his own judgment, and he must use them, too, in selecting the excellences of various styles as displayed in the manner of different performers. In either supposed condition of the actor in the period of professional preparation he must study the pro-

foundest forms of thought, the noblest moods of sentiment, the most vivid emotions of the soul, and dwell upon them until their full power and value are deeply felt, and their intensity glows into expression; then by the exercise of a sound discretion and correct taste fashion his external manners and adapt his thoughts and feelings to the presentation required by the poet, so that he may recreate Hamlet, Macbeth, or Lear in living attitude and movement, in tone and look, in very bodily presence, as seen by the reader of Shakespeare; and, moreover, he must execute the artistic feat so truly and effectively that amid assembled multitudes each individual will instantly recognize the universal burst of admiration and applause with which it is acknowledged.

How different are the circumstances under which such power is acquired! and how varied the self-culture by which it is matured! Viewed in this light, every actor becomes an instructive study to his brother-actor, and of all living performers none perhaps have taught the principles of the art by the suggestions of example more fully than the two most distinguished tragedians of our own day—Macready and Forrest.

MACREADY.

The former commenced his career, as it might be said, in the cradle of Thespis, his father having been a respectable and successful theatrical manager in most of the large towns of England,

and creditably sustaining a certain rank as an actor on the London boards, and having written at least one successful afterpiece, which still holds its place upon the stage. It is not, then, to be wondered at that the young aspirant, in actual possession of the most advantageous opportunities for studying those distinguished models of excellence in the actor's art so accessible during the early part of the present century, should have been smitten with a passion for the stage.

The theatrical tyro in this instance came to the study of dramatic art after the enjoyment of fine opportunities for previous mental culture, his father having designed him for the bar—a purpose which he relinquished only after long-continued solicitation on the part of his son, and with extreme reluctance.

Here, then, is an example of a débutant starting up from the very theatre itself, surrounded with every professional advantage. In these circumstances, however, he furnished the most important of all lessons to the young aspirant. He leaned on no factitious aid, but on adopting the profession gave himself wholly to study. Never was there a more earnest or devoted student; and when in a spirit of filial obedience he assumed the laborious task of stage-management for his father, he gave another practical lesson to the histrion. The stage under his management became, what it ought always to be, a school of dramatic instruction. Every actor had the benefit of his suggestions; rehearsals under his direc-

tion were objects of interest to all concerned in the business of the theatre. We are told by one intimately acquainted with Macready, who had watched his progress from the earliest stages of his professional career to that point in which, leaving the provincial theatres, he established a reputation for himself in the great metropolis, that he abolished all foolish fastidiousness about rank in the greenroom, and all petty jealousy on that account. For successive years he made it a point to aid his father by playing everything that came to hand in the routine of business, whether tragedy, melodrama, comedy, or farce. His consummate skill in dramatic expression was probably largely due to the course thus pursued in early life.

The success which followed his professional devotion was at one time most strikingly exhibited during a period of his father's career as manager in Scotland. Mr. Macready, Sr., had been induced to attempt the hazardous experiment of taking a lease of the theatre at Glasgow—a place somewhat famous, even in Scotland, for its sanctimonious abhorrence of a playhouse. Fanatic zeal had caused the burning down of more than one theatre in that place, and several managers in succession had ruined themselves in attempting to meet the enormous expenses inseparable from the arrangement of the new theatre, which, in a fit of absurd reaction against popular bigotry, was built of colossal dimensions and at an extravagant cost. The utmost exertions were required on the

part of both father and son to render the house attractive; and the latter, by his efficient control of the stage, as well as his own admirable playing, then fresh with all the force of youthful genius and natural freedom, placed his father's enterprise on secure ground, where it was maintained for several successive seasons. The varied and arduous duties which Macready's station then imposed, however, were never suffered to interfere with his personal studies, the daily ripening of his judgment, and the progressive refinement of his taste, which were continually evinced in the increasing depth and mellowness of his style.

One apparently insignificant trait in his Hamlet will best exhibit the self-correcting power of Macready's genius, and the fidelity to truth and Nature which study may develop in the best-constituted minds. His early manner in returning the skull of Yorick to its earthly home was an inadvertent act of juvenile extravagance, founded on the merely physical aversion of the senses to the loathsome object in his hand; he literally tossed it over his back to the gravedigger. But reflection soon suggested the quiet and subdued style of acquitting himself in this passage which afterward formed a more consistent treatment of the business of the scene.

The mention of this fact, familiar to those who saw Macready in his youth, suggests, by mere association, the manner of our own eminent tragedian, Forrest, in the same passage. Paragraphists too often echo each other's criticisms without

observing for themselves, and those who merely repeated the objections to Forrest's style of acting, that it was all physical force, might have derived a most impressive rebuke from his manner in this scene. He carefully handed the relic back to the gravedigger, like one conveying a frail but precious vessel which heedlessness might drop or injure. The effect was touching in the extreme; it bespoke all the gentleness and affectionate regard of the prince for him who had "borne him on his back a thousand times." One could not help contrasting the tenderness of Hamlet as he almost reverentially returned the skull, holding it in both hands, with the rough, abrupt, jocular manner of the gravedigger, who in an ebullition of humor generally gave the skull a good-natured slap of familiarity as he said, "A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! He poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once."

I have before referred to the fact that Macready was introduced to the London stage at a period when the impassioned style of Kean had given an undue bias to public taste, and that it led him in some respects to abandon his simplicity and truth to Nature, and to assume a more premeditated and intensified manner. But let critics determine whether his example ought not to suggest to young aspirants for professional distinction the value of attentive and habitual study founded on careful observation of the various elements which make up the sum-total of the actor's art.

I am well aware that there are those who ques-

tioned the power and genius of Macready, and objected to his anxiety about details of propriety on the part of subordinate performers. But it should never be forgotten that in this country he was always seen at a disadvantage, on account of the absence of those minor appointments which, when complete, give smoothness and finish to the effects of the stage, and that he was seldom sustained by persons habituated to his manner. The case very much resembles that of an individual accustomed to every luxury of life in its highest perfection who is suddenly required to accommodate himself to a scanty supply of homely fare. Macready's high conceptions of ideal excellence in every point of detail, and his rigor of stage-discipline, not to speak of the deplorable dulness of the material he had sometimes to mould, often created a prejudice against him, and a feeling that he was prone to harshness. It is too apt to be forgotten that one who has spent a life in the process of training stage-subordinates is not likely to excel in the good gift of patience. It would need something more than the amount of equanimity usually bestowed upon mere mortals to enable a conscientious, thoroughly-trained actor, when wound up to the highest pitch of inspiration and effect, to bear calmly one of those ridiculous blunders which draw tears of laughter instead of sorrow from the eyes of sympathetic spectators.

The genuine humanity of Macready was attested by the kind attention and generous aid which in his early days he bestowed upon those of his

father's company who were afflicted by illness or other misfortune, and his liberal contributions at all times to charitable funds of a professional character.

When playing on one occasion at an English provincial theatre, the manager (who seems to have been a judicious reformer) deducted one guinea, at the payment of the stipulated compensation of the actor, as the established fine for the use of a profane word at rehearsal. The tragedian acceded with great cheerfulness to the deduction, acknowledging its propriety, and on learning that such fines were contributions to a fund for sick and indigent actors, he handed the manager ten guineas more.

FORREST.

The name of Edwin Forrest is rendered doubly interesting to the lovers of the drama among us from the fact that he was the first American actor whose performances in tragedy received a complimentary recognition beyond the limits of our country. His early histrionic life is instructive as an instance of successful self-culture under great disadvantages.

It is well known that Mr. Forrest, while a mere youth, was carried by the current of circumstances to the West, where, unaided by the sympathetic recognition of leading actors, or indeed by anything like professional training from others, with his native vigor of mind and strength of will he

[illegible] through all opposing cir- [illegible] the foundation of a career [illegible] successful. His experiences [illegible] doubtedly very beneficial, [illegible] action and energy [illegible] he stood unrivalled. They [illegible] a great variety of [illegible] on his own resources, and [illegible] the adoption of a work or [illegible] their effect was [illegible] of the [illegible] marked decidedly [illegible] and [illegible] which subsequently [illegible] to [illegible] But a broader field opened [illegible] upon his return to [illegible] with [illegible] energy [illegible] of his own [illegible] he [illegible] of acting which [illegible] never criti- [illegible] at once upon the hearts of his audiences. Advancing years served to give detail and finish to many of his prominent impersonations and every succeeding season revealed new beauties of execution and evidences of profoundest study in all that most required mental [illegible] and artistic skill. The impression which [illegible] and superficial criticism at one time [illegible] was suited only to parts in which [illegible] to be expressed, afterward [illegible] conviction that his conception of the [illegible] which he appeared was studiously complete [illegible] representation skilfully sustained. [illegible] that his artistic excellence was acquired by [illegible] cultivation as the natural result

Yours sincerely,
Edwin Forrest

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of resolution and energy but increased the honor of its possession.

EFFORTS OF MEMORY.

One of the many evils inseparable from the mode of management peculiar to American theatres is the necessity imposed upon the players of overtaxing their memory by the continual study of new parts. Professor Dugald Stewart, who was well acquainted with Henderson, told Sir Walter Scott that his power of memory was the most wonderful he had ever met with. In the philosopher's presence he took up a newspaper, and after reading it once repeated so much of it that Mr. Stewart considered it utterly marvellous; and when he expressed his surprise, Henderson modestly replied, "If you had been obliged, like me, to depend during many years for your daily bread on getting words by heart, you would not be astonished that the habit should have produced this facility."

The sufferings of the young and ambitious actor from excessive brain-toil are such as persons out of the profession can scarcely imagine. During a visit of Mr. Cooper to Columbia, S. C., many years ago, when I was playing subordinate parts under the training of the veteran DeCamp, Mr. Cooper had selected for his benefit at the close of his engagement the play of *King Henry the Fourth.* But on the day before the performance a member of the company who was to play Hot-

spur was taken seriously ill, and no one would assume the part at so short a notice. Mr. Cooper was anxious to gratify his friends in Columbia by appearing in the character of Falstaff, and felt unwilling to give up the arrangement. The part allotted to the sick actor was at length proposed to me, and I agreed to assume it, with the understanding that I should be allowed to read the part if I could not commit it to memory in the short time which remained. Accordingly, with enthusiasm, or rather with impulsive folly, I commenced the study at the close of my professional duty that evening, sat up all night, and after rehearsal betook myself to the retirement of the adjacent woods for the remainder of the day with the book and a pincushion, stinting myself to half a dozen repetitions (each one marked by the transfer of a pin) for every line or sentence. When the evening came I swallowed a cup of tea in season to dress, and made my appearance in due time and place with my brain in an intense whirl. But, nerved to the effort, it held out till the excitement of the camp-scenes came, and then in a moment I found myself bewildered and helpless in the midst of an important speech. I became so utterly confounded that no prompting could rally me. Realizing the predicament in which I was placed, I stepped forward and explained my condition, and, throwing myself on the generosity of the audience, expressed my willingness, if it should be desired, to read the part. This liberty obtained, I took the book, but after reading half a dozen lines my

recollection returned, and laying aside the volume I proceeded to the close without further trouble. Half an hour's study of physiology at that period would have imparted, with much greater safety, the lesson I had learned from experience.

As an illustration of the intense emotion which the preparation of a part not unfrequently excites I am reminded of an incident in the history of Mrs. Siddons. Campbell states that Mrs. Siddons had performed Lady Macbeth in the provincial theatres many years before she attempted the character in London. Adverting to the first time this part was allotted to her, she said: "It was my custom to study my characters at night, when all the domestic cares and business of the day were over. On the night preceding that in which I was to appear in this part for the first time I shut myself up, as usual, when all the family had retired, and commenced my study of Lady Macbeth. As the character is very short, I thought I should soon accomplish it. Being then only twenty years of age, I believed, as many others do, that little more was necessary than to get the words into my head; for the necessity of discrimination and the development of character at that time of my life had scarcely entered into my imagination. But to proceed: I went on with tolerable composure in the silence of the night (a night I can never forget) till I came to the assassination-scene, when its horrors rose to a degree that made it impossible for me to get further. I snatched up the candle and hurried out of the room in a paroxysm of

terror. My dress was of silk, and the rustling of it, as I ascended the stairs to go to bed, seemed to my panicstruck fancy like the movement of a spectre pursuing me. At last I reached my chamber, where I found my husband fast asleep. I clapped my candlestick down upon the table, without the power of putting the candle out, and threw myself on my bed, without daring to stay even to take off my clothes. At peep of day I rose to resume my task, but so little did I know of my part when I appeared in it at night that my shame and confusion cured me of procrastinating any business for the remainder of my life."

There is no doubt much difference in the degree of susceptibility possessed by different individuals, and perhaps none but an experienced player can tell how far he may be at once in the spirit of his part and yet conscious of surrounding circumstances. But true acting is not that superficial or mimetic matter which it is often thought to be. It is to the imagination a deep reality, even when Reason holds the balance between judgment and feeling, and is not, as in the instance to which I have referred, frightened for the time from her propriety.

My friend, Mr. Edwin Thayer, who possessed a poetic temperament, and was indeed quite a rhymer, used to claim for me also a talent for making verses, and to prove it frequently related a story the substance of which was, that not long after my first appearance on the stage, one night at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, I was

announced to recite a poem, then a great favorite with the public, entitled "The Sailor Boy's Dream." Fearing that the prompter, who was old and nervous, might fail to render me such service as I felt very sure I should require, I asked Thayer to stand in the wing with the manuscript in his hand and watch the recitation word by word. He consented, and took the prompter's place, and I went on, made my bow, and began the poem. I was a little flustered at first, but soon recovered self-possession, gaining confidence at every line and warming up as my subject was developed. At the climax of the terrible wreck, however, as I struck the attitude of horror, I suddenly felt the ground swimming under me and all my blood seemed tending to my brain. I stole a glance at Thayer, who was standing with his eyes fixed on the manuscript, but he did not look at me. Clapping my hands to my head, I started forward with my eyes raised to heaven, and began a wild apostrophe to the dread power of the "Storm King," altogether unconscious of what I said, while word after word poured from my lips in a vehement torrent, until I brought the stanza to an end amid a burst of hearty and prolonged applause. As my excitement subsided the missing words returned, and, wellnigh exhausted with the conflict between memory and emotion, I finished my recitation and bowed myself off. Scarcely was I out of sight of the audience when Thayer cried out, in a tone of wonder and admiration, "Where did you get that other verse?"—"Why,

didn't you prompt me?" said I.—"Prompt you!" he exclaimed; "you never did better in your life. Where did you get the new lines?"—"Why," I replied, "I forgot the words, and in my fright I spoke what came uppermost, and don't know *what* I said."—"Neither do I," said Thayer; "but, words or no words, accent and rhythm were perfect, and the effect was fine. You must try and recall those words." But I felt that they had fled to the chaos from which they came, never to return, unless perhaps in some recurrence of that fearful delirium called "stage-fright," which is more apt to paralyze the tongue than to keep it in motion.

About the year 1833, when Mr. Charles Kemble and his daughter, Miss Fanny Kemble, were acting at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, I was playing at the Arch Street in the same city. The gentleman employed to perform the "juvenile characters" at the former establishment having retired from the stage, I was induced to relinquish my situation and become his successor. Before I had time, however, to familiarize myself with the manner of the distinguished performers I was engaged to support, I was cast for Leonardo in Knowles's play of *The Wife*. It was the first night of the play, and my part an important one. I was therefore more than usually nervous, and, striving to be correct in the delivery of the language, may have been lacking in the fervor of a lover. Miss Kemble rallied me on the formality of my manner, saying that I treated my lady-love as if I thought her "a widow bewitched." Im-

pressed with this criticism, I determined that the next time I should act as her lover I would not be chargeable with insensibility. A short time thereafter I was acting in the character of Bassanio, Miss Kemble representing that of Portia, and, having chosen the casket, I opened it and read the words upon the scroll, which conclude—

> Then turn thee where thy lady is,
> And claim her with a loving kiss;

which I instantly did, with all becoming respect, but with such a degree of fervor that the sound of the salute caused quite a sensation in the audience. Whereat Miss Kemble was somewhat annoyed, and took occasion to say, "It is possible to exceed the letter of a lesson;" by which I suppose she intended to intimate that I was rather "an apt scholar." As I did not exceed the limits of propriety, however, in obeying the injunction of the scroll, the fair Portia forgave my ardor, and probably soon forgot the effect upon the audience, which had at the moment disconcerted her.

Mrs. Mary Duff, probably the most excellent tragic actress of the old school in America, was a woman of great amiability of disposition, but of eccentric habits. She had an exceedingly nervous temperament, and, from the suffering it inflicted on her, became addicted to the use of opium.

In 1834 she played a short engagement at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, where, in

connection with one of her performances, I have a distinct recollection of a circumstance which led me into a "stage-dilemma."

The old tragedy of *Isabella; or, The Fatal Marriage*, was to be played. Mr. William B. Wood was to sustain the character of Biron, and Mrs. Duff that of Isabella, while I was to perform the part of Villeroy. I had never seen the play, and, from some circumstances which I cannot now recall, the notice I had received was so very short that I found it impossible to commit to memory more than a portion of the words. It was suggested, however, that I might "cut the part down to lines," as it is termed, and this I determined to do; and, after obtaining such ideas as I could gather from the prompter's book in relation to the "situations" and "business" of the scenes, I went home to commit to memory as much of the curtailed words as I could learn in the two or three hours that remained before the time fixed for the performance.

There is an old professional saying which runs, "Trust to luck to get you through, for ten o'clock must come;" and it was not long before I realized the fact that seven o'clock *had* come. In a state of great nervous excitement I soon found myself participating in a dialogue of which I knew little more than what was suggested by those portions of it to which I was to reply, but with the aid of the prompter and occasional hints furnished by the other performers, I continued to keep up my part of the action of the play. *The Fatal Mar-*

riage is an old-fashioned tragedy. Its movement is slow, and the acting of Mr. Wood and Mrs. Duff on this occasion was much after the conventional style peculiar to the past century; and having caught the undulating swing of the poetry I proceeded in deliberate and measured tones, not unfrequently improvising whole paragraphs and uttering sentences which savored much more of sound than sense, thus verifying a statement made by Dr. Rush in his *Philosophy of the Voice*, that "a person with a quick poetic ear and a free command of language will find no difficulty in carrying on, for any duration, an extempore stressful rhythmus of incoherent words or phrases."

In the third act, in the midst of the festivities incident to his marriage, Villeroy exclaims—

> My dearest Isabella, you must hear
> The rapture of my friends.
> Thy virtues have diffused themselves around,
> And made them all as happy as myself.
> Come, Isabella, let us lead the way;
> Within we'll speak our welcome to our friends,
> And crown the happy festival with joy.

I have now, and I think I shall always have, a distinct recollection of the words I delivered instead of the text. They were—

> Come, come, my dearest Isabella, come—
> My newly-won and loving, long-sought love!
> Let us within, and there, 'mid wine and song,
> And hearty offerings of our happy friends,
> We'll cap the climax of our doubtful joys!

A STORY OF RICHARD M. JOHNSON.

The performer by force of imagination may lose self-consciousness, while the auditor may be made to forget he is sitting at a play. Of the many striking effects of Miss Fanny Kemble's powers in tragedy recorded in histrionic annals, I know of none more remarkable, as having resulted in the entire abstraction of an auditor, than the following instance.

I have before referred to Hon. William C. Preston, Senator from South Carolina and president of Columbia College, as a practical elocutionist as well as a distinguished orator. He used to take great pleasure in relating the following incident, the points of which he had received from the Hon. John Quincy Adams. "Mr. Adams was fond of the drama, and often might be seen," said Mr. Preston, "in attendance at the Washington theatre, where his bald head was a conspicuous object among many other distinguished lovers of good acting. He always preferred to occupy a comfortable seat in what was termed in olden time the pit; there he could see and hear better than in any other part of the house, and moreover was not liable to be disturbed by people coming and going during the play or between the acts, the peculiar character and arrangement of the seats being such as to preclude the possibility of persons passing readily between or over them when occupied. One night Mr. Adams was seated in

his favorite place in company with Hon. Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky. The play was *Fazio*, with Mr. and Miss Kemble in the principal characters. It was a benefit-night, and the house was crowded with the most celebrated and fashionable people of the Capitol City, prominent among whom was the well-known and universally admired matronly belle or interestingly young-old lady, Mrs. Madison. Mr. Adams was deeply interested in the play, but found time occasionally to observe the impression it was making on Mr. Johnson, whose impulsive nature required an admonitory hand now and then to keep him in his seat, from which he would occasionally start with sudden abruptness at some unusually effective passage in the acting of Miss Kemble, who seemed to have taken entire possession of that gentleman's faculties, so thoroughly was he absorbed in the trials and sufferings of the character she was representing. The last scene of the tragedy was on, and the audience had become completely engrossed in the contemplation of the lifelike acting of the heroine. It had reached its climax: the frantic shrieks of the heartbroken Bianca rang through the theatre, while the curtain slowly descended and shut out the sorrows of the mimic world. Then the people, gradually recovering from the sad impressions of the tragedy, began, as usual, to observe the state of things in front of the curtain. 'But,' in the words of Mr. Adams, 'there sat Johnson perfectly entranced, wholly unconscious of every-

thing around him, his head rigidly bent forward, with his hands clapped down on his knees, his hair all disordered from the previous spasmodic clutchings of his fingers, his eyes flashing and fixed steadily on the green curtain before him, which a few moments before had fallen on the frenzied and unearthly screams of the exhausted actress, the sound of whose voice seemed still to be ringing in his ears.' As the strange figure was attracting the attention of the people around him in a manner that was not pleasant to Mr. Adams, he placed his hand on Mr. Johnson's shoulder, and, shaking him gently, said, 'Come, Johnson, come—the play is over.' Thus aroused, he started abruptly to his feet and exclaimed in an audible voice and in the most energetic manner, 'By Heavens, Adams! she's a horse! she's a horse!'—'Now,' said Mr. Adams, who perfectly understood Johnson's eccentric manners, and who enjoyed the whole affair in his quiet way, 'those who did not know the distinguished Kentuckian's passionate love for horses might think this a very rude thing to say about a lady; but as a fine horse to him was one of the grandest and most beautiful objects on earth, the honorable gentleman, enchanted as he was with her acting, could not, in the excitement of the moment, have paid Miss Kemble a more genuine compliment or expressed his unbounded admiration in a more natural manner.'"

CHAPTER XIV.

JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH AND EDWIN FORREST AS READERS.

I HAVE been led by experience to believe that actors generally consider the study of elocution unnecessary as a preparation for the practice of the dramatic art. This is doubtless owing to the fact that they do not clearly understand what is involved in the end and aim of the principles of vocal culture. The opinion is quite prevalent that elocution means reading by arbitrary rules and following certain prescribed grooves; but this is altogether a mistake. I have before remarked that each individual has his own characteristic way of speaking, and this arises from his native organism and acquired habits.

There is, as before stated, a proneness in human beings to imitate not only the sounds of Nature, to which the origin of language can be traced, but also to reproduce the quality of voice and kind of utterance peculiar to others which may have attracted their attention as being more pleasing, or more showy perhaps, than their own modes of speech. A child by imitating the lisp or other peculiarity of a playmate is liable to catch the

infection, as it does the measles. In childhood voices in most cases show the nature and disposition of the individual, but too often advancing life brings affectations, from the whine of the hypocrite to the tones of assumed gayety, levity, or indifference. Such modes of speech become what we call "natural," in the same manner that our walk or our gestures, or even our way of thinking, may be falsely termed our "natural" way.

But there is really more of indifference than ignorance in the manner of disposing of this subject. It is not my intention, however, to dwell upon the matter, and yet I cannot refrain from saying just here that elocution, as it is imperfectly taught, consists simply of a mechanical training of the faculties with regard to articulation, inflection, accent, and emphasis. When the pupil has acquired all the knowledge which the textbooks contain, he is told that he must make the subject-matter his own; that is, that he must enter into the spirit of the author and depend on feeling to give fitting expression to his language. The teacher is expected to enforce this instruction by illustrating the proper method of reading or recital, and then to charge the pupil to reproduce the manner indicated in the example. How can the object of such teaching be attained unless the organs of articulation and vocality, by primary discipline, are trained to acquire a correct and easy execution of all the mechanical offices of speech? Thus, and thus only, can a teacher faith-

fully and certainly impart to others the knowledge he may himself possess.

When the human voice is cultivated on the principles laid down by Dr. James Rush, and those principles are reduced to rules in accordance with the intelligence and taste of the teacher, our young speakers will be more like themselves than, as they so often are now, like the persons who teach them. Let there be less prejudice and more philosophy in our formulas concerning instruction in speech, and we shall have in abundance what is now so rare in its true sense—the blessed boon of originality.

BOOTH'S READING.

Dr. Rush has made elocution a science, and has referred to Mrs. Siddons and the elder Booth as having exhibited that perfection in speech attainable by the application of principles and natural expression to reading and dramatic and oratorical delivery.

I have before referred to the fact that Mr. Booth's great charm in acting was the result of his imaginative powers, and I will here add that he had also a profound knowledge of the qualities of sound and the laws of speech by which words are made an echo of the sense or sentiment they are used to express. He *studied* elocution—whether from books or from Nature it is not necessary to inquire, but he knew its importance to the acquisition of a just and effective stage-

delivery, and he was well acquainted with its application to the less demonstrative attributes of sentential enunciation, inflection, and the use of pause and emphasis. Speaking of the lack of an elementary knowledge of vocality, particularly on the part of young actors, he said: "They look at acting as a mechanical matter; they copy the facial expression, attitude of the body, and movement of the hands of some favorite actor, and try to imitate his voice, in the lump, as it were, without understanding or appreciating the value of individual words. In fact, it never appears to strike them that a word has, in a certain sense, the quality of hardness or softness, roundness or sharpness, extension or contraction—a capacity for elevation or depression, and all the forces of sound from the hum of a bee to the blow of a sledge-hammer. And, more than all this," said the poet-actor, "they forget that words are vehicles for tones as well as thoughts, and are capable of exhibiting in utterance all the colors of sound, from the sombre note of the bassoon to the scarlet tone of the trumpet, with every variety of tint that can be produced by the violin." Such was Mr. Booth's idea of vocal capacity and power, and to such knowledge did he owe his masterly execution in giving form and color to syllabic sounds.

One day he happened to enter a room where several gentlemen were finishing a bottle of sherry after dinner, and enjoying a social smoke. They were at the moment engaged in an earnest and rather noisy discussion of some local political

question, which, after a cordial greeting to Booth, was resumed, and, "being in the vein," he dashed into the argument with them. Having, in the course of his remarks, made some very original and peculiar statements, of which an explanation was requested, he took up a copy of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* which happened to be lying on the table, and said that the thoughts he had endeavored to express might perhaps be illustrated by some passages in that poem. Then, in a sort of dreamy abstraction, he began, half reading and half reciting, the opening stanzas, until, apparently forgetting himself and his companions (who were quite familiar with his singular moods), he seemed to become gradually transformed into the weird mariner with the glittering eye. The room in which the discussion of facts and politics had but a few moments before exercised and sharpened the wits of his auditors now appeared to be the deck of the ill-fated ship, and his friends, yielding to the overpowering influences of his magic tones, with elbows fixed upon the table and eyes riveted on the reader, felt themselves, in some mysterious manner, transported to the midst of the terrible scene so vividly portrayed. They saw the slimy sea, and the slimy things which crawled upon its surface; they felt their tongues withered and their throats parched with the burning drought; they heard the four times fifty men as, one by one, each fell a lifeless lump upon the rotting deck; and they read the horrible curse in the dead men's stony eyes,—until at length, as he finished the

wonderful recital and closed the book, his enchanted listeners slowly awoke as from a dreadful dream, and of each of them, as of the wedding-guest, it might have been said,

> He went like one that hath been stunned,
> And is of sense forlorn;
> A sadder and a wiser man
> He woke the morrow morn.

In such effects the reader and the actor prove the influence of the imagination over the will, and that the qualities of expressive vocality are far more important in tragic action than grace of gesture or personal bearing.

The pantomimic power of Garrick in delineating the passions, great as we are told it was, could not have thrilled the beholder with such soul-stirring sensations as Booth's impassioned vocal effects produced on his hearers when he was glowing with the fervor of the Tragic Muse.

Mr. Thomas R. Gould, in his work called *The Tragedian*, which I read with delight long after I had written my opinion of Mr. Booth as an actor and a man, says of him: "The airy condensation of his temperament found fullest expression in his voice. Sound and capacious lungs, a vascular and fibrous throat, clearness and amplitude in the interior mouth and nasal passages, formed its physical basis. Words are weak, but the truth of those we shall employ in an endeavor to suggest that voice will be felt by multitudes who have been thrilled by its living

tones—deep, massive, resonant, many-stringed, changeful, vast in volume, of marvellous flexibility and range, delivering with ease and power of instant and total interchange trumpet-tones, bell-tones, tones like the 'sound of many waters,' like the muffled and confluent 'roar of bleak-grown pines.' But no analogies in art or Nature, and especially no indication of its organic structure and physical conditions, could reveal the inner secret of its charm. This charm lay in the mind of which his voice was the organ—a 'most miraculous organ,' under the sway of a thoroughly informing mind. The chest voice became a fountain of passion and emotion. The head register gave the 'clear, silver, icy, keen, awakening tones' of the pure intellect. And as the imagination stands, with its beautiful and comforting face, between heart and brain, and marries them with a benediction, giving glow to the thoughts and form to the emotions, so there arose in this intuitive actor a third element of voice, hard to define, but of a fusing, blending, kindling quality, which we may name the imaginative, which appeared now in some single word, now with the full diapason of tones in some memorable sentence, and which distinguished him as an incomparable speaker of the English tongue. That voice was guided by a method which defied the set rules of elocution. It transcended music. It 'brought airs from heaven and blasts from hell.' It struggled and smothered in the pent-fires of passion, or darted from them as in tongues of flame. It was 'the earth-

quake voice of victory.' It was, on occasion, full of tears and heart-break. Free as a fountain, it took the form and pressure of the conduit thought, and, expressive beyond known parallel in the voice of man, it suggested more than it expressed."

Such a strong and many-sided presentation of the quality of Booth's voice might seem almost extravagant. But let any conscientious seeker after truth with a taste for such a task look carefully into the *Philosophy of the Voice*, and it must become apparent to him that the vocal organs were intended to express every sympathy of the soul. The physical properties of the tone-producing mechanism are shown by the analysis of Dr. Rush to be capable, under the sway of the passions, of expressing every forcible, every delicate, tunable or untunable, sound that the wonderful organism of the ear is susceptible of hearing. That which shocks the nerve and distracts the brain, wraps the senses in delight or swells the soul with rapture, finds a sympathy, simple or subtle, in the auditory nerves. When the passions are aroused and seek utterance in articulate or inarticulate sounds, they create discord or harmony on the sympathetic ear. No one of all the orators of Greece and Rome, nor any one who has been fashioned after them in modern times, has probably ever portrayed the beauty, truth, and power of the human voice as they were displayed in his best efforts by Booth. Mr. Gould, himself an artist, and evidently of a poetic temperament,

felt the irresistible *something*, and truly said it was out of the reach of elocution. It was that which is sensible to the spiritual grasp, as when the soul is held in thrall by the subtle magic of that electric power which Puck boasted of when he said,

> I'll put a girdle round about the earth
> In forty minutes.

Who can give form or sound to the music of the spheres, the roar of ocean, or Niagara's thunder? yet have we not within ourselves something that interprets them through the sensitive organs which throb and pulsate within us when under the domination of the mighty and wonderful in Nature?

FORREST'S READING.

In striking contrast with what has been said of Mr. Booth were the characteristics of Mr. Edwin Forrest. Mr. White, who first formed Forrest's manner out of the usual schoolboy style of reading, was a man of great intelligence and culture in his art, but eccentric, enthusiastic, and very egotistical. In his idea of delivery the principal thing was *emphasis*, and at this he labored and pounded with every kind and degree of pressure and force. But this quality did not adhere to Forrest's mode of reading after he had once tested the practical method of dramatic action. White's influence was, however, observable in his articulation, which was always very distinct. He was a great admirer

of Kean, whom he had met and acted with in Albany before he had won any commanding position on the stage. There was an almost ferocious intensity in Kean's articulative stress, and his deep guttural tones seemed to struggle in the grasp of the organs till they burst forth more like yells of demoniac rage than human utterance; while to this were added the graces of a soft and almost womanly tenderness of voice whenever he chose to employ them as an offset to his vehement and rapid flights of passion. These entirely new effects were too tempting to be disregarded by the young and ardent American actor in his efforts to keep pace with the public demand for novelty and improvement in dramatic art, especially as the most cultivated of the English actors were yearly becoming candidates for American recognition.

Thus, Forrest was almost unconsciously led to the reception of other impressions than those which he had no doubt received in early life from Cooper, and gradually became a believer in Kean's method, at least so far as to adopt his deep and growling tones; and with these he combined much of the deliberate utterance of the old English school, until toward the close of his career it was his habit to make use of almost as many suggestive pauses as marked the style of the great classic tragedian, John Philip Kemble.

About the year 1841, while I was teaching elocution in Boston, one morning Mr. Forrest dropped into my rooms. He was returning from a rehear-

sal, and was somewhat fatigued. I had just been giving a lesson, and we began a friendly chat about reading. A copy of Willis's poems was lying on the table, and taking it up Mr. Forrest began to read in a delineative manner, subdued but demonstrative and impressive. As he proceeded I could not but feel how much of his own strong individuality colored his utterance of the poetic thoughts, while his energized emphasis seemed to suggest the idea that he was exhibiting his peculiar powers of elocution rather than giving form and life to the language of the author. There seemed to be too much display of the vehicle and too little regard for its freightage. Shakespeare says,

> Conceit, more rich in *matter* than in words,
> Brags of its *substance*, not of ornament.

Parrhasius, in the dreamy atmosphere of his studio, was made by the reader to appear a material abstraction amid artistic surroundings in the dim poetic light of seclusion and study; but all was too ponderously palpable for the mental eye. As the tragedian became absorbed in his reading the intensity of his expression, aided by his fine vocal powers, held me in a profound state of admiration, and yet I felt that he was *acting* his subject, and not describing it. Indeed, so apparent did this become that I was quite conscious of seeing and hearing more with the eye and ear of an actor than with the organs of one who was absorbed in a poet's thoughts But when utterance

was given to the following lines I became fully assured that the reader was stirred to the innermost depth of an impulsive nature impatient and rebellious against conventional dictation:

Pity thee? So I do!
I pity the dumb victim at the altar,
But does the robed priest for his pity falter?
I'd rack thee, though I knew
A thousand lives were perishing in thine:
What were ten thousand to a fame like mine?

Hereafter? Ay, hereafter!
A whip to keep a coward to his track!
What gave Death ever from his kingdom back
To check the sceptic's laughter?
Come from the grave to-morrow with that story,
And I may take some softer path to glory.

No, no, old man! We die
Even as the flowers, and we shall breathe away
Our life upon the chance wind, even as they.
Strain well thy fainting eye,
For when that bloodshot quivering is o'er,
The light of heaven will never reach thee more.

Yet there's a deathless name,
A spirit, that this smothering vault shall spurn,
And like a steadfast planet mount and burn;
And though its crown of flame
Consumed my brain to ashes as it shone,
By all the fiery stars I'd bind it on!

Ay, though it bid me rifle
My heart's last fount for its insatiate thirst;
Though every lifestrung nerve be maddened first;
Though it should bid me stifle

The yearning in my throat for my sweet child,
And taunt its mother till my brain went wild.

All! I would do it all,
Sooner than die, like a dull worm to rot,
Thrust foully into earth to be forgot!

I had known Mr. Forrest intimately for several years prior to the period of which I have spoken, and was quite familiar with his views of life, both present and future; but never did I feel so near the inner life of the man as I did in listening to his reading of "Parrhasius." He was evidently in one of his strange moods and under a sombre cloud. He was only reading a poem, but with the peculiar tones of his voice came the impression, "There are more things in" my friend's "heaven and earth than are dreamt of in" my "philosophy."

When men grind their teeth in speech and choke with passions strong and deep, we may know the brain is restless and the heart ill at ease. The spiritual adviser, the man of law, and the delineator of human passions often exhibit in the tones of their utterance more of the state of the inner sanctuary than at the moment they imagine or intend. The tone of the voice is not unfrequently the index of the heart.

ADAH ISAACS MENKEN.

I have before referred to an instance in which Mr. Macready was placed in a distracting dilemma

through the blundering of an incompetent actor at the culminating point of one of his finest situations in *Macbeth*. One can well imagine the feelings of a performer who, yielding himself to the successive development of the plot and incidents of one of the grandest productions of our greatest dramatist, and being wound up to a high pitch of interest and effect, suddenly finds himself utterly overthrown by the inefficiency or neglect of other performers engaged in the same scene. And yet from the "hand-to-mouth" mode of management prevalent all over the country the tragedian and his audience are constantly subjected to such results. Of many cases in point which have come under my own observation, I am reminded of the following, in which it will be observed inordinate vanity and misdirected impulses led a young lady to attempt without preparatory study the impersonation of one of Shakespeare's most powerful creations.

I was fulfilling a short engagement in Nashville, Tenn., and the manager had made an arrangement with Miss Adah Isaacs Menken (so famous for her Mazeppa performances) to act the leading female characters in my plays. I found her, however, to be a mere novice, and not at all qualified for the important situation to which she had aspired. But she was anxious to improve and willing to be taught. A woman of personal attractions, she made herself a great favorite in Nashville. She dashed at everything in tragedy and comedy with a reckless disregard of consequences, until at

length, with some degree of trepidation, she paused before the character of Lady Macbeth! I found in the first rehearsal that she had no knowledge of the part save what she had gained from seeing it performed by popular actresses of the day.

Miss Menken was a woman of literary taste, and had gained some reputation as a writer for newspapers and magazines. She had withal a good understanding and a quick perception of what may be termed the more palpable signification of what was written, but could not rise to a perfect appreciation of its highest sense. So she came to me and frankly said, "I know nothing of this part, and have a profound dread of it, but I must act it, for I have told the manager that I was up to the performance of all the leading characters."—"Why," I replied, "you don't even know the words, and have no time to study them."—"Oh, that's of no consequence," she replied; "I can commit the lines in a few hours if you will run over them and mark the emphasis for me."—"But," I said, "that will not do unless you have a preconceived idea of the character and an appreciation of its purposes in relation to Macbeth. You can give no proper expression to the emphatic words when they are pointed out to you, for you have no time to acquire the power to bring them into proper subjection to your will as expressive agents. All I can do under the circumstances is to read the part to you, and leave you to your own resources for the rest." I accordingly gave the lady

a few general ideas of the action of the part, and finished by begging her at least to learn the *words*, and for the acting trust to chance. Night came, and with it came Miss Menken arrayed to personate the would-be queen. She grasped the letter and read it in the approved style, holding it at arms' length and gaspingly devouring the words with all the intensity of ferocious desire; then, throwing her arms wildly over her head, she poured out such an apostrophe to guilt, demons, and her own dark purposes that it would have puzzled any one acquainted with the text to guess from what unlimited "variorum" she could have studied the part. However, as Casca said of Cicero, "He speaks Greek!" and Miss Menken spoke what the people thought was "Shakespeare," and, for aught they knew to the contrary, it might have been Greek too.

Flushed with her reception and the lavish applause which followed the reading of the letter, she entered on the next scene, where Lady Macbeth chastises the flagging will of her consort "with the valor of her tongue," and at her sneering reference to "the poor cat i' the adage" she swept by her liege lord as if he were a fit object for derision and contempt; and then came another round of applause. After Macbeth's announcement that he was capable of doing "all that dare become a man," the lady returned to the charge with most determined scorn and denunciation, and in tones which might have become a Xantippe exclaimed,

> What beast was it, then,
> That made you break this enterprise to me?
> When you durst do it, then you were a man;
> And, to be more than what you were, you would
> Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
> Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:
> They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
> Does unmake you.

Here, "taking the stage," she rushed back to Macbeth, and laying her head on his shoulder whispered in his ear, "I don't know the rest." From that point Macbeth ceased to be the guilty thane, and became a mere prompter in a Scotch kilt and tartans. For the rest of the scene I gave the lady the words. Clinging to my side in a manner very different from her former scornful bearing, she took them line by line before she uttered them, still, however, receiving vociferous applause, and particularly when she spoke of dashing out the brains of her child; until at length poor Macbeth, who was but playing a "second fiddle" to his imperious consort, was glad to make his exit from a scene where "the honors" were certainly not "even."

Having recovered from her stage-fright, Miss Menken, by what is termed "winging it"—that is, by throwing down the book between the wings of the scene when going on the stage, and taking it up again for another reading when going off—contrived to get through the part.

MR. FREDERICK BROWN.

Mr. Frederick F. Brown was the leading actor of Mr. DeCamp's company. He was at one time quite a favorite on the London boards both in tragedy and comedy. When quite young he was distinguished for his ability as a pantomimist, and was fond of acting the hero in *La Perouse.* During a performance of that once-popular pantomime a most extraordinary incident occurred through a misunderstanding on the part of the property-man. The first scene of the piece opens with a view of the sea and a shipwreck. In the midst of thunder and lightning a ship is seen to sink, and a sailor, after buffeting the waves, is finally thrown on shore. He staggers to a bank and throws himself down in a state of exhaustion while the storm rages on.

In order to render the story clear to the mind of the reader, it will be necessary to describe the manner in which theatrical thunder and lightning are produced. Imagine, then, a pair of ordinary fire-bellows with a flat tin box fastened to the nozzle, the top of the box perforated like a flour-dredger, and in the middle a socket containing a piece of lighted candle. This box is filled with powdered resin, which, when the bellows are blown, is forced out at holes surrounding the candle, and, meeting the flame, makes a brilliant blaze. Thus by repeated puffs of the bellows an effect like lightning-flashes is produced. The property-man stands between the wings of the

stage, out of sight of course, and puffs his bellows, the flashes from which, reflected on the stage, make quite a good representation of vivid lightning. The thunder is usually made by rolling wooden balls along troughs set above the scenes for that purpose, or by shaking a plate of sheet iron suspended by a rope over the prompter's box at the side of the stage.

Before appearing as the shipwrecked sailor Mr. Brown must be understood to have given directions to the individual who makes and dispenses the lightning. The property-man in this case was a Frenchman of a quick, irritable temper, who did not feel at all complimented when his English was called into question, and was therefore very apt to say, "Oh yez, I undare-stand—all right!" Brown was very prosy and particular in his forms of expression, repeating himself so often as to render what he had to say somewhat obscure: "Now, Nick, you know, I want you, you know, to give me half a dozen puffs" (quite natural for an actor!) "when you see me first stagger out of the water and throw myself down on the bank. Then run to the right-hand side of the stage and stand in the wings ready for me; when I throw myself against the wing on that side, you know, flash up pretty brightly. Then run round, you know, to the left-hand side, you know, and when I cross over and lean against the wing on that side, give it to me again. Then back to the right-hand wing, and repeat as before; so follow me up till I stagger and fall on my face in front of the footlights;

and then puff away as hard and fast as you can, and keep it up till the applause stops."—"Yez, sare, yez—all right!" said Nick.—"All right!" said Brown.

The scene began and the music struck up. This was supposed to be expressive, at one time of a storm, and at another of the feelings of the unfortunate sailor, who now appeared, and struggling through the water, reached the land and fell upon the bank to a well-timed "chord" from the orchestra, accompanied with brilliant flashes of lightning, and, much to the astonishment of Brown, with unmistakable laughter from the audience. Raising himself as the music began to change for his action, he staggered across the stage to a *pizzicato* movement, struck his attitude at the right-hand wing with another chord, when a roar of laughter again burst forth as the lightning flashed across the darkened stage. Again the music changed, and, fainter still, the poor sailor labored to reach the opposite side and throw himself for support against the wing, when another chord from the orchestra and another flash of lightning, followed by boisterous laughter, made Brown aware that something was going wrong. But intent on keeping time to the music of the scene and preserving the consistency of action, which did not permit him (the half-dead sailor) to look back when his life depended on going ahead, and totally unconscious of the cause of the laughter, he kept up his feeble efforts to reach the footlights, while at each wing at which he rested the merriment increased;

till at last, falling on his face with the final crash of the music, the whole house became convulsed. Then turning on his back, ye gods! how was he horrified to behold Nick immediately behind him puffing away at the lightning-bellows, while roar after roar of laughter burst from the audience as well as from the actors, who had also become acquainted with the situation! Puff! puff! went the bellows. "Get off! go away!" screamed Brown, "go away!" But no: Nick was "all right." Was he not ordered to puff away till the applause stopped? So Nick kept puffing, and the audience kept laughing and applauding, till the prompter rang down the curtain amid screams of merriment and thunders of applause.

Not till he had risen from the stage did Brown learn how matters had worked up to such an extraordinary climax. Nick's "All right!" had been all wrong by his mistaking Brown's orders to follow him up—which meant from wing to wing behind the scenes—while Nick understood that he was to follow the actor up in sight of the audience; and finding he had made a "hit," he kept following him up, fully convinced that he was "all right."

CHAPTER XV.

FORREST AND HIS SOCIAL RELATIONS.

FORREST started in professional life with an instinctive admiration for the sublime and an ardent love of the beautiful in Nature and Art. He threw himself heart and soul into the feelings and passions of the author he intended to illustrate, without, however, possessing either the inclination or ability perfectly to analyze his thoughts, but grasping the whole with fervor and independent will. Under such influences he achieved a success which brought him before the public as a rising genius at an early period of life. Then came the time in which, as I have already stated, he met and was strongly impressed with Edmund Kean, whose energized enunciations and startling transitions made him the sensation of the day. Forrest, like Macready, left the truer guide, untrammelled Nature and her precepts, for a school of art which proffered a distorted, if not a perverted, imitation. In this both Macready and Forrest followed "the fashion of the times," accepting the declaration that

> The drama's laws the drama's patrons give,
> For those who live to please must please to live.

The acting of Forrest was natural, impulsive,

and ardent, because he was not so well trained as his English rivals in what may be termed a false refinement. True dramatic art may be said to be the sister of Nature, but her teachings are continually perverted by those who, following the example of Garrick, take the liberty of interpreting them according to their own ideas. Forrest was not considered as polished an actor as Macready, and was often charged with rudeness and violence in his impersonations, and even ridiculed for muscularity of manner; and yet I never knew a tragedian who did not use all his physical power in reaching the climax of his most impassioned delineations.

It must be remembered that Mr. Forrest was a strong man, and when excited his passions appeared more extreme than those of one more delicately organized; and unqualified condemnation was only heard from those who were either unable or unwilling to perceive that the traits which distinguished our then young actor, were really more natural than the elaborate presentations and precise mannerisms of Macready. Hence the *people* followed Forrest, and loved him, while those who claimed to be the *elite* admired and applauded Macready, who came endorsed by a metropolis which in those days in matters of art assumed the direction of American judgment. Now, true dramatic excellence is believed to lie midway between Forrest and Macready, as Beatrice said in speaking of Don John: "He were an excellent man that were made just in the midway between him and Benedick."

Public animadversion and private sneers fell like coals of fire on the nature of a man who was sensitively alive to the fact that a want of scholastic education, whatever might be his natural gifts, was, in the minds of a certain class, an evidence of inferiority. But although Forrest in his youth had only received what was then called a good school-training, he furnished in his manhood an example which might have been profitably imitated by the young men of his time, who, with all the advantages of collegiate education, failed to exhibit the progressive intellectual improvement which steadily marked his course from year to year. Many who did not admire his earlier dramatic performances were greatly impressed with his manner in the later part of his career, his impersonation of Lear being generally considered the crowning-point of his excellence.

Mr. Longfellow, who did not admire Mr. Forrest in *Jack Cade* and *The Gladiator*, speaking of his Lear, said it was a noble performance, grand and pathetic, well worthy the admiration of the lovers of good acting. Many of the cultivated frequenters of the theatre in Boston were prejudiced against Mr. Forrest for what they considered an offensively independent bearing, which at times amounted to arrogance; but this feeling was no doubt the result in a great measure of stories circulated by those conversant with the gossip of the greenroom. It is certain that Mr. Forrest never made any effort to conciliate his brother-performers, and over many of the subor-

dinate wearers of the "sock and buskin" he not unfrequently exercised such an authority as, it must be confessed, much resembled tyranny. So far as the public were concerned, he did not care to change the impression entertained of his manners, but rather encouraged it, as an evidence that he considered himself in every respect equal to those who, assuming superiority, intellectual or otherwise, were disposed to deny his ability as an actor or his right to social equality. The parts in which he was most popular were those of Spartacus, Metamora, and Jack Cade, and these characters, which owed much of their effectiveness to personal bearing and muscular action, he continued to play more frequently than others in which he exhibited far greater excellence, both before and during the period of his maturity—not perhaps from choice, but because the managers, with a regard to their pecuniary interest, wished such performances as were likely to draw the best houses.*

There were, however, many persons among those to whom I have alluded who, preferring what they esteemed more intellectual and refined entertainment, and feeling more in sympathy with the representations of Othello, Hamlet, and Lear, affected a contempt for the more popular performances, and commented upon them with selfish and

* Old Mr. Burke, the father of the youthful dramatic and musical prodigy so popular half a century ago, when he heard of Mr. Forrest as a distinguished performer, said, "Does he draw big houses?" and being told that he did, he exclaimed, "Then, by the powers! he's a great actor!"

unjust severity. And as this depreciation of Mr. Forrest was accompanied with extravagant expressions of admiration for Mr. Macready, by which he was held up as the beau-ideal of dramatic art, it seriously injured the reputation of Mr. Forrest in what is termed good society.

As an illustration of Mr. Forrest's intellectual appreciation and intense delineation of such characters as he made exclusively his own, I will here relate a striking incident.

In the year 1831, Mr. Forrest came to Augusta, Ga., where I was playing an engagement with Mr. DeCamp, with the intention of introducing his then new character of Metamora. The arrangements for the play were complete, and the house crowded to excess in every part. Everything progressed satisfactorily until the celebrated council-scene came on. Here Metamora upbraids the elders of the council for their unjust and cruel treatment of his tribe, and denounces war and vengeance upon them until the land they had stolen from his people should blaze with their burning dwellings and reek with the blood of their wives and children. Then, dashing down his tomahawk and drawing his scalping-knife, he gives the war-whoop and disappears in the uproar and confusion of the scene. Evident dissatisfaction had begun to find expression long before this climax was reached, and as the chief rushed from the stage he was followed by loud yells and a perfect storm of hisses from the excited audience, who seemed ready in their fury to tear everything to

pieces. Order was with difficulty restored, and the performance continued till the curtain fell upon the dying chief amid unqualified evidences of disapprobation. Both actor and manager now began to realize what had not occurred to them before—that the sentiment of the play was a positive protest against the policy which had deprived the Indians of Georgia of their natural rights and driven them from their homes. The next day the public mind was highly excited, and Mr. Forrest openly charged with insulting the people of Augusta by appearing in a character which condemned the course of the State in dealing with the land-claims of the Cherokee Indians. The citizens were all deeply interested in this question, and in consequence felt indignant at any reference to the stealing of Indian property, and especially so at being menaced with the tomahawk and scalping-knife of the red man's vengeance so bitterly threatened in the language of the play. In the course of an angry discussion of the subject, and in reply to a gentleman who ventured to assert that an actor did not express his own sentiments in the language of the character he assumed, and that, therefore, the author should be held responsible and not Mr. Forrest, an eminent lawyer, Judge Shannon, said: "Any actor who could utter such scathing language, and with such vehemence, must have the whole matter at heart. Why," said he, "his eyes shot fire and his breath was hot with the hissing of his ferocious declamation. I insist upon it, Forrest believes in that d——d Indian

speech, and it is an insult to the whole community." The next night *Metamora* was acted to empty benches, and consequently withdrawn, and the remaining nights of Mr. Forrest's engagement showed, by the returns at the box-office, that the citizens of Augusta did not relish any adverse opinions upon the legislative decisions of the State of Georgia.

FORREST AT A BOSTON SUPPER.

While Mr. Forrest was fulfilling an engagement in the old Tremont Theatre, Boston, somewhere about 1840 or '42, some of my friends—among them the late Hon. George S. Hillard and some of the professors at Cambridge—knowing his disinclination to accept invitations to formal entertainments, expressed a desire to meet and pass an evening with him socially; and it was suggested that my house would be an appropriate place. Knowing these gentlemen to be admirers of the great English actor Mr. Macready, and rather inclined to underrate Mr. Forrest's intellectual qualities, I at once accepted the proposition, and invited them to meet my friend at supper on a Saturday evening, the custom in Boston at that time being to have no theatrical performances on that night. At first, Mr. Forrest positively refused to come, declaring that he did not wish to be exhibited in private for the gratification of curiosity, and doubtless for comparison with Macready, who was considered *by a certain class of cultivated people*

(laying a peculiar emphasis upon this phrase) as his superior, both professionally and in private life; and, further, that he had no wish to enter into any such competition with Mr. Macready, for whose scholarship he had a much greater admiration than for his ability as a delineator of Shakespearian character. To all this he added that he was tired and out of humor, and would much prefer taking his supper quietly in my cozy little home with my wife, my children, and myself. I urged the matter, however, on the ground that the gentlemen I wished him to meet were not, in the light sense of the term, fashionable people, but men of learning, lovers of the arts, and especially of the drama, and not actuated by any idle curiosity, but simply by a desire to meet him as one they had often seen and admired as an actor. So he reconsidered the matter, and finally accepted my invitation.

Contrary to my expectations, when the evening arrived he was in excellent spirits, cheerful, and even gay; he responded willingly to the inquiries of my friends in relation to the impressions he had received in foreign travel, commenting with great intelligence and discrimination upon the habits and customs of different nations, the peculiarities of their governments, describing various scenes through which he had passed and peculiar persons he had met with, related many anecdotes, gave his opinion of the character and condition of dramatic art among the French, Italians, Spanish, and Germans, and dwelt at length upon the

enjoyment he had derived from visiting the great galleries of painting and sculpture. To say that my friends were gratified would convey a very faint idea of the impression made by his conversation; they were perfectly charmed, and regarded him not only as a gentleman unaffected and courteous, but possessing very remarkable qualities of mind. I was also much impressed with his manner and all that he said—I never knew him more effective on the stage than he was that night—but I was particularly struck with the evidence that he derived so much pleasure in endeavoring to please others. Mr. Hillard thereafter, in referring to the occasion, expressed great surprise not only at the fluency of his language, but the variety and brilliancy of his expressive powers. He said that he had found Mr. Forrest to differ entirely from the idea he had formed of him from the character of his acting and from what he knew of the public estimate of his intellect and culture.

Within the past few years I have heard distinguished literary people, both ladies and gentlemen, speak in terms quite as complimentary of Mr. Forrest's manners and conversation. Mr. Hawthorne remarked that he was one of the most brilliant conversationalists he had ever met—that he heard him talk two hours at a sitting, and could have listened to him all night. It is much to be regretted that a man so gifted, capable of affording to society so much profit and pleasure, should have retired, as it were, within himself, nar-

rowing the circle of his usefulness and bestowing his sympathies only on a favored few, who ventured and were permitted to enter the limit of a morbid seclusion.

JOHN KEMBLE AS HAMLET.

"I attended," says John Taylor, "Mr. John Kemble's first appearance [as Hamlet] at Drury Lane Theatre. It was impossible to avoid being struck with his person and demeanor, though the latter was in general too stately and formal; but perhaps it only appeared so to me, as I had seen Garrick perform the same character several times a few years before, and had a vivid recollection of his excellence. There was some novelty in Mr. Kemble's delivery of certain passages, but it appeared to me rather the refinement of critical research than the sympathetic ardor of congenial feelings with the author. I sat on the third row of the pit, close to my old friend Peregrine Phillips, the father of Mrs. Crouch. Phillips was enthusiastic in his admiration and applause upon every expression and attitude of Kemble, even to a fatiguing excess. When Kemble had dismissed one of the court-spies sent to watch him, and kept back the other, Phillips exclaimed, 'Oh, fine! fine!'—'It may be very fine,' said I, 'but what does it mean, my friend?'—'Oh,' he answered, 'I know not what it means, but it is fine and grand.'

"Notwithstanding the unfavorable impression

he made upon me, in justice I must say that in subsequent performances he was so much improved by reflection and practice that his Hamlet really presented a model of theatrical excellence, and probably never will be exceeded in correct conception and dignified deportment. His Coriolanus was a masterpiece. He often paid me the compliment of consulting me on any passage of Shakespeare that appeared doubtful, and would listen with great attention to any opinion that differed from his own; and I do not recollect any occasion on which I had not reason to assent to his explanation of the text. But I never knew any person who was more ready to attend to the suggestions of others. He often desired that I would let him know where I did not approve of his acting, and his manner was so open and sincere that I did not scruple to give my opinion, even to such a master of his art and so acute a critic. He never spared pains to ascertain the meaning of what he or anybody thought doubtful.

"I remember once, in compliance with his request, I told him I thought that in one passage in *Hamlet*, Garrick, as well as himself and all other actors, was wrong in delivering it. The passage was where Horatio tells Hamlet that he came to see his father's funeral, and Hamlet says it was rather to see his mother's marriage, when Horatio observes, 'It followed hard upon.' Hamlet replies—

> Thrift, thrift, Horatio; the funeral baked meats
> Did coldly furnish forth the marriage-table.

I observed that this passage was always given in anger, whereas in my opinion it ought to be delivered with ironical praise. He immediately took down a polyglot dictionary and examined the derivation and accepted meaning of the word *thrift* in all the languages, and, finding that it was always given in a commendatory sense, he thanked me, and ever after gave the passage in the manner I had suggested.

"I ventured to point out other alterations in *Hamlet* which it might appear vain in me to mention. Suffice it to say, that in hearing them he said, 'Now, Taylor, I have copied the part of Hamlet forty times, and you have obliged me to consider and copy it once more.' This is a proof of the labor and study which he devoted to his profession. It is but justice to the rest of his family, as well as to himself, to say they were all so perfect in their parts that the prompter never was appealed to in their acting."

This habit of frequently writing out the part to be studied was customary among many old actors. I remember that Mr. William B. Wood, speaking on the subject, informed me that he found frequent copying the most effectual mode of committing words to memory. I recently heard Mr. William Warren—"the universal William" of Boston fame—a most painstaking and indefatigable student, remark that he had written and rewritten a new part several times during a week's study preparatory to rehearsal.

GARRICK AS BENEDICK.

Reynolds relates the following: "Calling one morning on my mother's friend, Mrs. Nuttall, in Palace Yard, I met for the first time the late Mr. Harris, who for nearly half a century so ably and liberally managed Covent Garden Theatre. He was speaking of Garrick; and on asking Mrs. Nuttall if she had lately seen him, she replied, 'Last night I went with this young gentleman and saw him play Benedick.' She then introduced me to Mr. Harris, who, taking me by the hand and kindly shaking it, said, 'Well, my young Westminster, and pray in which scene might you like Garrick best?'—'In the scene, sir,' I replied, 'where he challenges Claudio.'—'And why, Frederick?' inquired Mrs. Nuttall.—'Because, madam, he there made me laugh more heartily than I ever did before, particularly on his exit, when, sticking on his hat and tossing up his head, he seemed to say as he strutted away, "Now, Beatrice, have I not cut a figure?"'—'You are right, my boy,' rejoined Mr. Harris. 'Whilst other actors, by playing this scene seriously, produce little or no effect, Garrick, by acting as if Beatrice were watching him, delights instead of fatiguing the audience.'"

(That a *boy* should approve of such a distorted exhibition of stage-business seems natural enough, but I am surprised that an experienced manager of a theatre should make a favorable criticism thereon; and, more so, that Mr. Garrick should have so misrepresented a Shakespearian character. Let

us examine the case. Benedick has his own views, doubtless, of the accusation made against Hero by his friend, though as yet he has expressed no opinion. He listens with intense interest to the grief and indignation of Beatrice, and says, "Think you on your soul the count Claudio has wronged Hero?" To which she replies, "Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul." This is solemnity in question and asseveration—no foundation on which to build a jest. Benedick is in earnest, "in most profound earnest," when he promises to become the champion of the injured lady. Therefore, a soldier and a gentleman, he would not deliver his challenge in a spirit of levity, nor would he after it, in order to get up a laugh, *stick* his hat on, toss up his head, and strut off the stage after the manner of a peacock or frivolous coxcomb. Such conduct under the circumstances would have been an insult to Beatrice, unworthy such an actor as Mr. Garrick, and a reflection upon the genius of Shakespeare.)

"'Such is his (Garrick's) magic power,' Mr. Harris continued, 'that a few nights ago, whilst waiting for him at the stage-door till he had concluded the closet-scene in *Hamlet*, I was so awestruck by the splendor of his talent that, though from long intimacy Garrick and I always addressed each other by our Christian names, on this occasion, when he quitted the stage and advanced to shake hands with me, I found myself involuntarily receding, calling him "sir," and bowing with reverence. He stared, and expressing a doubt of my sanity,

I explained; on which he acknowledged with a smile of gratification 'that next to Partridge's description of him in Tom Jones, this was the most genuine compliment he had ever received.'

"As a contrast to this panegyric, and to show that the greatest literary doctors can disagree as positively as the medical, I will repeat the remark that even Boswell classes amongst Dr. Johnson's absurd and heterodox opinions. On Boswell asking him, 'Would not you, sir, start as Mr. Garrick does if you saw a ghost?' Johnson replied, 'I hope not; if I did I should frighten the ghost.'

"Shortly afterward I saw Garrick perform Hamlet for the last time. On the morning of that day Perkins, who was my father's wig-maker as well as Garrick's, cut and trimmed my hair for the occasion. During the operation he told me that when I saw Garrick first behold the Ghost I should see each individual hair of his head stand upright; and he concluded by hoping that, though I so much admired the actor, I would reserve a mite of approbation for him as the artist of this most ingenious mechanical wig—'the real cause,' he added, '*entre nous*, of his prodigious effects in that scene.'

"Whether this story was related by the facetious perruquier to puff himself or to hoax me, I will not pretend to decide; but this I can say with truth—that though I did not see Garrick's hair rise perpendicularly, *mine* did when he broke from Horatio and Marcellus, with anger flashing from 'his two balls of fire' (as his eyes were rightly called), exclaiming, 'By Heaven, I'll make a

ghost of him that lets me!' The effect he produced in a previous scene, when he uttered the following lines, was electric:

> I will watch to-night;
> Perchance 'twill walk again.

I have since heard many actors of Hamlet give these words in a calm, considerate, and consequently ineffective manner; but Garrick, buoyant with hope and paternal love, rushed exultingly forward, and spoke the words with an ardor and animation that electrified the whole audience.

> Hence to thy praises, Garrick, I agree,
> And, pleased with Nature, must be pleased with thee."

GARRICK'S LAST APPEARANCE.

"On the night Garrick left the stage my brother Jack and I, after waiting two hours, succeeded at length in entering the pit. The riot and struggle for places can scarcely be imagined, even from the following anecdote. Though a side-box close to where we sat was completely filled, we beheld the door burst open and an Irish gentleman attempt to make entry *vi et armis*. 'Shut the door, box-keeper!' loudly cried some of the party.—'There's room, by the powers!' cried the Irishman, and persisted in advancing. On this a gentleman in the second row rose and exclaimed, 'Turn out that blackguard!'—'Oh, and is that your mode, honey?' coolly retorted the Irishman. 'Come, come out, my dear, and give me satisfaction, or I'll pull your

nose, faith, you coward, and shillaly you through the lobby.' This public insult left the tenant in possession no alternative; so he rushed out to accept the challenge, when, to the pit's general amusement, the Irishman jumped into his place, and having deliberately seated and adjusted himself, he turned round and cried, '*I'll talk to you after the play is over.*'

"The comedy of *The Wonder* commenced, but I have scarcely any recollection of what passed during its representation; or, if I had, would it not be tedious to repeat a ten-times-told tale? I only remember that Garrick and his hearers were mutually affected by the farewell address, particularly in that part where he said, 'The jingle of rhyme and the language of fiction would but ill suit my present feelings;' and also when, putting his hand to his breast, he exclaimed, 'Wherever may be the changes of my future life, the deepest impression of your gratitude will remain here, fixed and unalterable.'

"Still, however, though my memory will not allow me to dwell further on the events of the evening, my pride will never permit me to forget that I witnessed Garrick's dramatic death."

Speaking of Hull the actor, contemporary with Garrick, Taylor says: "I was very intimate with him, and held him in great respect. He was deservedly esteemed by the whole of the theatrical community. He was in the medical profession before he adopted that of an actor, but in what rank I never knew. He was generally styled

'Doctor' by the performers. As he had a strong lisp, it is strange he should have ventured on the stage, but he probably depended on his good sense and knowledge. He was an actor of great judgment and feeling, and his merit in Friar Lawrence was universally acknowledged; and in this character his lisp was even an advantage. He was a man of learning and possessed literary talents. He wrote a tragedy entitled *Fair Rosamond* and published two volumes of poems by subscription, and I had the pleasure of being one of his subscribers. He also published *Letters* to a lady who had been his pupil, and whom he afterward married. This lady appeared upon the stage in the character of Paulina in *The Winter's Tale.* At the time I knew them they were advanced into the vale of years, and were a perfect Darby and Joan. She often came behind the scenes to admire and animate her husband long after she had left the stage. It was gratifying to observe the attention which they paid to each other at their advanced period of life. This attention was often a subject of mirth to the lively actors, but was always respected by those of a graver kind, because it was evidently the effect of long and rooted attachment.

"I remember one night he was just going to take a pinch of snuff when she said, 'Try mine, my dear.'—'I will, my love,' he replied, and in his manner displayed the endearment of a youthful lover. Yet there was nothing ludicrous in the gallantry of this aged pair.

"Mr. Hull was for a few years the stage-manager of Covent Garden Theatre, and in that capacity, as well as for his good sense, was always required to address the audience when anything particular had occurred. A ludicrous circumstance happened during the time of certain riots in London. A mob came before his door and called for beer. He ordered his servant to supply them, till a barrel which he happened to have in his house was exhausted; and soon after another mob came with the same demand, and did not depart without doing mischief. A third mob came and clamorously demanded the same refreshment. Mr. Hull then addressed them, with theatrical formality, in the following terms: 'Ladies and gentlemen, one of my barrels has been drunk out and one has been let out; there are no more in the house, and therefore we hope for your usual indulgence on these occasions.'

"Mr. Hull deserves the perpetual gratitude of the theatrical community, as he was the original founder of that benevolent institution 'The Theatrical Fund,' which secures a provision for the aged and infirm of either sex who are no longer capable of appearing with propriety before the public. That he was really the founder admits of no dispute, and therefore, as I have attended many anniversary dinners in honor of the institution, I have been astonished that no tribute to his memory has been ever offered on the occasion.

"From respect to the memory of Mr. Hull I wrote the following lines on his death:

EPITAPH

On the late Thomas Hull, Esq., founder of The Theatrical Fund.

Hull, long respected in the scenic art,
On life's great stage sustained a virtuous part,
And, some memorial of his zeal to show
For his loved art, and shelter age from woe,
He formed that noble Fund which guards his name,
Embalmed by gratitude, enshrined by fame.

This epitaph is inscribed on his tombstone in the Abbey churchyard, Westminster."

RICHARD THE THIRD FROM A FRENCH STAND-POINT.

I have endeavored, at some length, to interest my readers by describing some of the traits of character peculiar to my professional brethren, and now offer a sketch of a gentleman amateur who lived in Philadelphia many years ago. His idea of acting was founded, as he imagined, on the great Talma, and was at variance with the English style on the ground of a want of Nature in our acting. However such a notion got into his head, it is not my intention to illustrate the naturalness or unnaturalness of his dramatic assumptions. I can only give an idea of his French-English pronunciation, of which, of course, he was not at all aware: "You see, sare, ze English actor, he speak his solique to ze people too much. Ze solique is always addressed to your*self* when ze language is confiden*tial* to the thought. For in-st*ance*, Hamlet say to *him*self, 'To-be-or-not to

be—zat-is-ze-question; wezzer it is-noblair-in-ze-mind-to suffare-ze sling and arr*ow* of-out*rage*ous-fort*une*-or to-take-arms *a*gainst a-sea *of*-troub*el*, and by oppos*ing* end *zem*. To die,—to-sleep-no-more; and by asleep—tosay-we *en*d-ze-heart-ache-and ze tousand natu*ral* shocks zat flesh *is* heir *to*. 'Tis a *con*somazion *de*voutly to-*be*-wisht-for.—Todietosleep—tosleepperchance to dream. —Ah, ha! *zare* is ze *rub*, for in *zat* sleep *of* death what dream *may* come when we-have-s*huf*fle-off-this mortal coil—must *give* us pause. So con-sci*ence* does make cowards of *us* all, and enter-*prise* of great pease and mo*ment* with zis *re*-gard their curr*ent* turns *a*wry, and lose *ze* name of act*ion*."

Convinced of his great genius for interpreting Shakespeare, although no one else could perceive it in the slightest degree, our self-satisfied amateur engaged the theatre for one night only. Provided with a fine dress, he "strutted his brief hour on the stage," very much to his own gratification and delight, and, it must be allowed, with like results to his audience—save and except this difference, that while his was serious and sober satisfaction, the audience took their money's worth in unqualified merriment and gave unbounded applause in the spirit of fun.

This state of things went on until the French tragedian, getting somewhat of a glimmering idea of the true state of the case, abated his efforts, which some of his auditors considered as depreciating their estimate of the true value of his per-

formance, and in consequence "the goose" came down, as stage-parlance designates the offensive use of the sibilant element as an expression of disapprobation. The hissing grew to a whistling, and the whistling to a shrill and not melodious imitation of those feline concerts of the midnight roof where applause is generally bestowed in boots, bootjacks, and old bottles as chance shots warranted to hit everything except what they are aimed at.

To make a long story short, however, the curtain fell, and the discomfited Richard appeared before it as a gentleman; which, by the by, was not by any means his first appearance in *that* character. He soon convinced the audience that though he might not be able to act the tyrant, he could, at least, when not riding his unfortunate dramatic hobby, feel the oppression of ridicule.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, bowing very low and speaking in a tone that brought the house to its senses at once, "I have pairform ze character of Rich*ard* ze Tree times. My concepzion of ze tyrant viz ze *back* and ze *hump* may not be vat you understand as ze Shakespeare interpretasion, but, ladies and gentlemen, several people look many ways, not all ze same in *one* direcsion, and particulaire at ze meaning of ze grand poet, vich I very much love and consider vith great condescension. Therefore, as I have made ze mistake, I vill now make ze apology by being *my*self again, and nevare more try to be *him*self vonce more again, as Shakespeare says of Rich*ard* ze Tree times.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, before I go away allow me to say, If any pairson present have ze opinion of him*self* as more Richard ze Tree times as *I* have make, zat pairson is very much welcome to vear my crown and have my dress to make ze performance. Ladies and gentlemen, I will now say, Your service I am nevare no more to forget. Bon soir!"

CHAPTER XVI.

FORREST AS A YOUTHFUL AMATEUR.

ONE night after the play, having partaken of a light supper, and while smoking a cigar, of which indulgence he was passionately fond, Mr. Forrest, being in a cheerful, chatty mood, told me the following story of his boyish experience during the residence of his parents in Southwark, Philadelphia.

"I was," he said, "about fourteen years of age, and had won some honors in school-declamation, and particularly in the recital of an epilogue by Goldsmith called 'The Harlequinade.' My sisters had made me a dress of small chequered red and black squares, after the style usually worn in stage-pantomime, which with a dagger of lath and the half mask of black muslin and pasteboard, made up quite a neat and effective costume, which of course was greatly admired by my companions, and I have no doubt much increased the applause which always attended my recitation of the epilogue.

"In connection with the usual feats of ground

and lofty tumbling among the boys, they had a custom of walking on their hands and throwing 'somersets,' which was learned from the circus-riders and posture-makers of the times. One of these acrobatic feats in which I had become quite an adept was throwing side 'somersets,' or transforming myself into a wheel by springing from my hands to my feet, and thus whirling sidewise round and round. I was in the habit of introducing this peculiar locomotion at the close of 'The Harlequinade,' going once or twice round the platform and springing off at a bound, by which I invariably 'brought down the house' with approving shouts from my comrades.

"Of course no boy in Southwark could possess such accomplishments and not be the observed of all school-boy observers. Now, in our neighborhood stood the Old South Street Theatre, the first built in Philadelphia, or rather on its outskirts, where it was located to evade the city laws against theatrical entertainments. In this theatre, which was afterward turned into a whiskey-distillery or brewery, the officers of the British army, when occupying Philadelphia under General Howe, were in the habit of acting for their own amusement and that of their Tory friends. The elegant and unfortunate Major André was the leading spirit of the company, being stage-manager, scene-painter, and general actor. For many years a scene known to have been painted by that gentleman was held in great estimation by the various companies which occupied the building from time

to time after the evacuation of the city by the British troops.

"At the time alluded to a company of amateurs, consisting of printers, apprentice-boys, and some gay lawyers and other drama-loving individuals, were in the habit of acting plays on Saturday nights, charging a small fee for admittance. One Saturday afternoon I was playing my usual game of marbles, with my knuckles well chalked, and it may be somewhat grimy, when a young fellow came up and asked me if I was Ned Forrest, the spouting school-boy. I replied that I was Ned, and asked him what he wanted. He said if I would come with him for a moment out of the crowd he would tell me of a way by which I could make a dollar or two very easily. Putting up my store of marbles, I walked aside with him, when he informed me that he was one of the South Street Theatre actors, and that he wanted me to 'go on' for a lady's part—that the lady was sick, and they could not fill her place unless I would consent to do it.

"Of course I jumped at the offer, but then came the difficulties. In the first place, I could not study the part at so short a notice, but he said I could read it; the lady was a captive in a Turkish prison, and I could recline on a sofa and read the part. I asked him where the dress was to come from, and he said the lady-artist would not lend hers. Then I told him that my sister's dresses would fit me very well—that I had often tried them on, but that they were rather short in the skirt. He said

that was of no consequence; he was 'the manager in distress,' and that I could cover up my feet with a shawl, and while lying on the couch nobody would perceive the shortness of the dress. But I asked what I should do about my hair, and he said there was at the theatre a cavalry helmet with a long black horse-tail, which could be taken off and parted over my head and hang down over my shoulders. Then he added that I could get one of my mother's window-curtains or bolster-cases, which could be pinned around my head for a turban, and I would be all right.

"'That's first-rate,' said I; 'and now I am engaged, and will be on hand, sure.'

"All was settled. No one was to know who the new recruit was, so no one at home would have occasion to feel compromised by my appearing on the stage. Thus was I engaged, and within two or three hours I was to arrive at the height of a boy's ambition—to act a part on the stage of a real theatre.

"Night came. The curtain rose and discovered me lying on a couch, but, sad to tell, the lights were too dim, being only tallow candles, for me to see to read my part. It was a soliloquy, however, and I took my time, and have no doubt that I improvised additions to the text, though I am not quite sure they were improvements. But the audience did not seem to notice the shortcomings of the heroine, and I began to feel that it was all right, when the governor or some other character came on, and then I was compelled to look more closely to the words. Finding it almost impossible where I sat to

read the part, and observing that the lamps of the side-scenes were considerably brighter than the footlights, in an unlucky moment I jumped off the couch and ran to the wings to catch the light upon the page of my book. Under the original arrangement my short dress was to be eked out with a shawl, so I had not thought it necessary to change my boots or my stockings, which latter were of the kind called Germantown wool. I had managed from my new position to get at the first speech, which was only a line or two; then the other character had a long reply to make, and while I was endeavoring to get a peep at the next page I was suddenly aroused by a shrill voice from the pit shouting out, 'That's Ned Forrest; twig his Germantown stockings and his boots. Hurrah for Ned Forrest!' This was too much for the temper or patience of the audience, and laughing, hissing, and clapping of hands struggled for the mastery.

"Knowing it was all up with my part of the performance, I threw down the book, and running to the footlights just opposite the spot from which came the voice, saw a well-known face, red as a beet with laughing and shouting. Shaking my fist at the rascal, I cried, 'Bill Jones, I'll lick you like the devil the first time I catch you on the street—remember that!'

"The audience had stopped the uproar for a moment, but now it became a fearful storm of applause, hisses, and cries of 'Turn him out!' 'Off! off!' while a heavy hand fell on my shoulder, and the next moment I was whirled off the

stage, and that part of the play came to a close. While I was changing my female dress for my own clothes, however, I determined upon another demonstration. I knew enough about stage-matters to calculate upon the interval between the play and farce; so, keeping quiet, and being for the moment forgotten, I waited till the curtain fell on the play. Then, watching my opportunity, I took a survey, and, as I supposed, the stage was dark, the music playing, and the actors all engaged in dressing. Near the stage-door was a small beer-shop, and, peeping in, I saw the prompter and my friend the manager drinking a mug of beer. This was my time. I ran home, got my Harlequin dress, slipped out of the house, and returned to the theatre. It was but the work of a few moments to re-array myself, put on my mask, seize my sword of lath, and run down to the stage-entrance. The prompter had not returned, the music had stopped, and the house was quiet.

"I rang the prompter's bell; the curtain rose; I ran on the stage, and began my recitation amid a dead silence, but applause soon cheered me, increasing as I proceeded; and at the close I threw myself on my hands and went whirling round the boards amid shouts and hurrahs, and then sprang off the stage, where I was received by my ungrateful manager, who gave me a good shaking and told me to quit the premises and never try that trick again."

The following are the lines recited by Mr. Forrest on the occasion referred to:

EPILOGUE.

Written by Goldsmith, and originally spoken by Mr. Lee Lewis, in the Character of Harlequin, at his Benefit.

Hold, prompter! hold! A word before your nonsense:
I'd speak a word or two to ease my conscience.
My pride forbids it ever should be said
My heels eclipsed the honors of my head—
That I found humor in a piebald vest,
Or ever thought that jumping was a jest. [*Takes off his mask.*
Whence and what art thou, visionary birth?
Nature disowns and Reason scorns thy mirth.
In thy black aspect every passion sleeps—
The joy that dimples and the woe that weeps.
How hast thou filled the scene with all thy brood
Of fools pursuing and of fools pursued,
Whose ins and outs no ray of sense discloses,
Whose only plot it is to break our noses,
Whilst from below the trapdoor demons rise,
And from above the dangling deities!
And shall I mix in this unhallowed crew?
May rosined lightning blast me if I do!
No, I will act—I'll vindicate the stage;
Shakespeare himself shall feel my tragic rage.
Off, off, vile trappings! a new passion reigns;
The maddening monarch revels in my veins.
Oh for a Richard's voice to catch the theme:
"Give me another horse! bind up my wounds! Soft! 'twas
but a dream."

Ay, 'twas but a dream, for now there's no retreating;
If I cease Harlequin, I cease from eating.
'Twas thus that Æsop's stag, a creature blameless,
Yet something vain, like one that shall be nameless,
Once on the margin of a fountain stood,
And cavilled at his image in the flood.
"The deuce confound," he cries, "these drumstick shanks!
They never have my gratitude nor thanks;

They're perfectly disgraceful. Strike me dead!
But for a head— Yes, yes, I have a head.
How piercing is that eye! how sleek that brow!
My horns— I'm told horns are the fashion now."
Whilst thus he spoke, astonished to his view
Near and more near the hounds and huntsmen drew.
"Hoicks! hark forward!" came thundering from behind.
He bounds aloft, outstrips the fleeting wind;
He quits the woods and tries the beaten ways;
He starts, he pants, he takes the circling maze.
At length his silly head, so prized before,
Is taught his former folly to deplore,
Whilst his strong limbs conspire to set him free,
And at one bound he saves himself—like me.
[*Taking a jump through the stage-door.*

"By the performance of that night," said Mr. Forrest, referring to the incident previously related, "my destiny was sealed. I felt that I was to be an actor, and that an actor I would be, come what might."

FORREST'S LACK OF IMAGINATION.

Here was an early manifestation of that will which no opposing power in after-life could ever break. Poverty and toil were braved and borne unflinchingly, and always with a hopeful if not a cheerful heart. Boy and man, he fought on through every difficulty, surmounting every obstacle, until his dreams of histrionic honors were realized.

Mr. Forrest's predominating characteristic was strength, which seemed in a great measure to tinge all the gentler qualities of his nature. In the tragedy of *Macbeth* the guilty thane mani-

fests the power of imagination, under the influence of which he starts at shadows, while at the same time he compels "all causes to give way" before his cruel purpose; but his unimaginative wife, "the unsexed woman," exhibits the fixed determination of the wilful mind and scoffs at painted fear. Had Mr. Forrest been a woman, he could and would have played Lady Macbeth, the woman of will, better than as a man he did play Macbeth, whose imagination interfered with his will. Mr. Forrest had but little imagination. In Macbeth he looked at the air-drawn dagger with such an intense scrutiny that one would have supposed he deemed it a juggler's illusion, and in a certain sense he expressed a feeling of anger that he was not able to clutch it. His manner did not indicate that conscience, leagued with imagination, had conjured up the fearful agent to appall him and arrest his arm; and the visionary dagger was evidently less terrible to him than if it had been a real one. In the first act Macbeth says,

> This supernatural soliciting
> Cannot be ill, cannot be good: if ill,
> Why hath it given me earnest of success,
> Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor:
> If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
> Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
> And make my seated heart knock at my ribs
> Against the use of nature? Present fears
> Are less than horrible imaginings:
> My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
> Shakes so my single state of man, that function
> Is smothered in surmise, and nothing is
> But what is not.

Here Macbeth stands, as Banquo says, wrapt in thought—"See how our partner's wrapt"—carried from the present into the future, while every sense is held in abeyance by the working of the mind. The language clearly indicates this, and yet Mr. Forrest illustrated the words,

> And make my seated heart knock at my ribs
> Against the use of nature,

by striking his armed breast with his truncheon, thereby transforming what was a silent inner force into a very noisy outward one.

When a young man acting Shylock, Mr. Forrest was in the habit of carrying in his gaberdine a small whetstone for sharpening the knife with which he expected to cut the pound of flesh. This I never saw, but I was told of it by an old actor of the Bowery Theatre, New York, who vouched for its truth. Here was enough of the material for the most matter-of-fact mind, and quite as palpable a misinterpretation of Shakespeare as the action of certain other Shylocks, who whet the knife by sweeping it in wide reaches over the stage; for Bassanio says,

> Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

Shylock replies,

> To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

Gratiano retorts,

> Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
> Thou makest thy knife keen.

Certainly no stage-direction is needed here to show that the sole of the shoe is indicated for the sharpening of the knife.

The deep tones of Mr. Forrest's voice, mingled with the peculiar huskiness which generally marked his utterance, gave great intensity to his expression of rage and scorn, and even in his ordinary conversation not unfrequently suggested a degree of bitterness which he probably did not intend. Mr. Thomas Hamblin, the tragedian, once said to me, in reference to the sullen manner of Mr. Forrest—which I have no doubt was the result in a great measure of his constant and wearing professional labors—"Forrest is not now conscious of it, but he will yet realize the fact that constant growling at people will cause him, in time, to growl at himself. He is building around himself, as I may say, a wall, which every year is increasing in height, so that after a while no one will be able to get a peep at him; and he will then feel, when it is too late, that he has shut the world out, and cut himself off from all social intercourse save with the petting and the petted few to whom he extends an open sesame to his varying moods of bitterness and mirth." This was said in 1847 or '48. My own impression is, that before Forrest's temper had been entirely soured by unfortunate circumstances he was a kind-hearted man, and any other profession than his own might have developed in him a humanity "as broad and general as the casing air." He openly avowed himself a good hater, and expected others to hate

those he hated with a severity equal to his own. "To err is human, to forgive divine;" but this was not his creed. Mr. Forrest was ambitious of posthumous honor. He worked hard long after his profession had ceased to be a source of pleasure to him. He continued to act merely for the accumulation of money, his sole and cherished object being to build up a monument to his memory such as the actor Alleyne founded in Dulwich College—an asylum for superannuated actors—although in his lifetime he manifested for his needy professional brethren no interest whatever. In his extreme care to prevent the possibility of failure, however, it is very doubtful whether he has not really defeated the purpose for which he labored so long. He laid the foundation, as it now appears, of a visionary benefaction, which is likely to operate only in an oblique direction, and will probably reach very few of those for whom it was intended.

JOHN BATES AND FORREST.

In the midst of Mr. Forrest's popularity, when making a journey from New Orleans to the East, he was not at all in a good humor with himself, on account of overwork and ill-health. While stopping in Louisville to rest, his old friend, Mr. Sarzedas, then stage-director for John Bates, the well-known Western manager, called on him and tendered him an engagement for twelve nights—six in Louisville and six in Cincinnati. For the

reason already mentioned, and because the season was drawing to a close, Mr. Forrest did not wish to act; but as the theatre was without a star performer, Mr. Sarzedas urged the matter, and he at last consented to play six nights in each city, the terms to be half the gross receipts. The engagement turned out in Louisville as Mr. Forrest thought it would, but poorly for either star or manager. Better for the former, of course, as he had no company to pay, while the latter did not receive enough to cover his expenses. Mr. Forrest was mortified at the result in Louisville, and wished to annul the engagement for Cincinnati, on the original ground of overwork and ill-health. But Manager Bates would not release him from the contract, and insisted on its fulfilment. Mr. Forrest stoutly objected, however, and as there was no written agreement, he considered the whole thing a failure and was determined to proceed on his journey to the East. Mr. Sarzedas at this juncture suggested that Mr. Bates should re-engage the tragedian at a certain amount per night; and finally the parties agreed that two hundred dollars should be the payment for each performance. Upon this settlement the engagement was closed, and Mr. Forrest opened in Cincinnati to a full house, whereupon he became disgusted, seeing that his fixed salary would fall far short of what his share of half the receipts would have been. He accordingly refused to act his most telling parts, such as Spartacus and Jack Cade, and insisted upon performing Rolla, Vir-

ginius, etc.; but in the face of all this the theatre continued to be filled to its utmost capacity.

One morning Mr. Forrest, in company with our mutual friend, Mr. Peter Logan, was in the box-office, when Mr. Bates, who was "counting up the house," as it is termed, handed a slip of paper to Mr. Logan and said, "That's the biggest pig in the pen yet—over one thousand dollars in the house last night;" at which Mr. Forrest remarked, addressing himself to Mr. Logan, "It is perfectly wonderful to see such houses; I had no idea that the patrons of the drama in Cincinnati were so numerous." John Bates was a very practical man, blunt at times even to rudeness, of a somewhat taciturn disposition, cynical, dry, and very deliberate in speech. He had also a strange habit of making a kind of snipping sound with his lips, as if he were spitting, between his sentences, which gave his manner an appearance of nervousness. But there was no such weakness about Bates: he was as cool as a cucumber, and without a particle of the greenness of that vegetable. When Mr. Forrest expressed wonder at the multitudes of people who came to his performances, Bates turned and said in the driest possible way, "Why, Mr. Forrest, maybe you don't know that Tom Thumb is exhibiting in Cincinnati. He holds forth only in the morning; so the people who come to town to see his show, having nothing better to do at night, come to the theatre to see you act." My old and esteemed friend, Mr. Logan, in telling the story, said that the faces of the two men

were a perfect study after Bates had made his remarks—Forrest nearly choking with indignation, and looking as if he could eat the manager without "a grain of salt," while Bates continued to count his tickets as complacently as if he had been offering the tragedian a compliment.

BARBARA S——.

The following touching incident from the pen of Charles Lamb points in a feeling manner to the hard lot of those who in privation and suffering begin at the bottom of the theatrical ladder and steadily toil upward in pursuit of daily bread and Fortune's perspective favors:

On the noon of the 14th of November, 1743 or '44, I forget which—it was just as the clock had struck one—Barbara S——, with her accustomed punctuality, ascended the long, rambling staircase, with awkward interposed landing-places, which led to the office, or rather a sort of box with a desk in it, whereat sat the then treasurer of (what few of our readers may remember) the old Bath Theatre. All over the island it was the custom—and remains so, I believe, to this day—for the players to receive their weekly stipend on the Saturday. It was not much that Barbara had to claim.

This little maid had just entered her eleventh year, but her important station at the theatre, as it seemed to her, with the benefits which she felt to accrue from her pious application of her small earnings, had given an air of womanhood to her steps and to her behavior. You would have taken her to be at least five years older.

Till latterly she had merely been employed in choruses or where children were wanted to fill up the scene. But the manager, observing a diligence and adroitness in her above her age, had for some few months past entrusted to her the

performance of whole parts. You may guess the self-consequence of the promoted Barbara. She had already drawn tears in young Arthur; had rallied Richard with infantine petulance in the Duke of York; and in her turn had rebuked that petulance when she was Prince of Wales. She would have done the elder child in Morton's pathetic afterpiece to the life, but as yet the *Children in the Wood* was not.

Long after this little girl was grown an aged woman I have seen some of these small parts, each making two or three pages at most, copied out in the rudest hand of the then prompter, who doubtless transcribed a little more carefully and fairly for the grown-up tragedy-ladies of the establishment. But such as they were, blotted and scrawled as for a child's use, she kept them all, and in the zenith of her after reputation it was a delightful sight to behold them bound up in costliest morocco, each single, each small part, making a book with fine clasps, gilt-splashed, etc. She had conscientiously kept them as they had been delivered to her; not a blot had been effaced or tampered with. They were precious to her for their affecting remembrances. They were her principia, her rudiments, the elementary atoms—the little steps by which she pressed forward to perfection. "What," she would say, "could India-rubber or a pumice-stone have done for these darlings?"

As I was about to say, at the desk of the then treasurer of the old Bath Theatre—not Diamond's—presented herself the little Barbara S———. The parents of Barbara had been in reputable circumstances. The father had practised, I believe, as an apothecary in the town. But his practice—from causes which I feel my own infirmity too sensibly that way to arraign, or perhaps from that pure infelicity which accompanies some people in their walk through life, and which it is impossible to lay at the door of imprudence—was now reduced to nothing. They were, in fact, in the very teeth of starvation when the manager, who knew and respected them in better days, took the little Barbara into his company.

At the period I commenced with her slender earnings were the sole support of the family, including two younger sisters.

I must throw a veil over some mortifying circumstances. Enough to say, that her Saturday's pittance was the only chance of a Sunday's (generally their only) meal of meat. One thing I will only mention, that in some child's part, where in the theatrical character she was to sup off a roast fowl (oh joy to Barbara!) some comic actor, who was the night's caterer for this dainty, in the misguided humor of his part threw over the dish such a quantity of salt (oh grief and pain of heart to Barbara!) that when she crammed a portion of it into her mouth she was obliged sputteringly to reject it; and, what with shame of her ill-acted part and pain of real appetite at missing such a dainty, her little heart sobbed almost to breaking, till a flood of tears, which the well-fed spectators were totally unable to comprehend, mercifully relieved her.

This was the little starved, meritorious maid who stood before old Ravenscroft, the treasurer, for her Saturday's payment.

Ravenscroft was a man, I have heard many old theatrical people besides herself say, of all men least calculated for a treasurer. He had no head for accounts, paid away at random, kept scarce any books, and, summing up at the week's end, if he found himself a pound or so deficient, blessed himself that it was no worse. Now, Barbara's weekly stipend was a bare half-guinea. By mistake he popped into her hand a whole one.

Barbara tripped away. She was entirely unconscious at first of the mistake: God knows, Ravenscroft would never have discovered it. But when she had got down to the first of those uncouth landing-places she became sensible of an unusual weight of metal pressing her little hand.

Now mark the dilemma. She was by nature a good girl. From her parents and those about her she had imbibed no contrary influence. But then they had taught her nothing. Poor men's smoky cabins are not always porticos of moral philosophy. This little maid had no instinct to evil, but then she might be said to have no fixed principle. She had heard honesty commended, but never dreamed of its application

to herself. She thought of it as something which concerned grown-up people, men and women. She had never known temptation, or thought of preparing resistance against it. Her first impulse was to go back to the old treasurer and explain to him his blunder. He was already so confused with age, besides a natural want of punctuality, that she would have had some difficulty in making him understand it. She saw that in an instant. And then it was such a bit of money! And then the image of a larger allowance of butcher's meat on their table next day came across her, till her little eyes glistened and her mouth moistened. But then Mr. Ravenscroft had always been so good-natured—had stood her friend behind the scenes, and even recommended her promotion to some of her little parts. But, again, the old man was reputed to be worth a world of money. He was supposed to have fifty pounds a year clear of the theatre. And then came staring upon her the figures of her little stockingless and shoeless sisters. And when she looked at her own neat white cotton stockings—which her situation at the theatre had made it indispensable for her mother to provide for her with hard straining and pinching from the family stock—and thought how glad she should be to cover their poor feet with the same, and how then they would accompany her to rehearsals, which they had hitherto been precluded from doing by reason of their unfashionable attire,—in these thoughts she reached the second landing-place; the second, I mean, from the top, for there was still another left to traverse.

Now Virtue support Barbara! And that never-failing friend did step in, for at that moment a strength not her own, I have heard say, was revealed to her—a reason above reasoning—and without her own agency, as it seemed (for she never felt her feet to move), she found herself transported back to the individual desk she had just quitted, and her hand in the old hand of Ravenscroft, who in silence took back the refunded treasure, and who had been sitting (good man!) insensible to the lapse of minutes which to her were anxious ages; and from that moment a deep peace fell upon her heart and she knew the quality of honesty.

A year or two's unrepining application to her profession brightened up the feet and the prospects of her little sisters, set the whole family upon their legs again, and released her from the difficulty of discussing moral dogmas upon a landing-place.

I have heard her say that it was a surprise not much short of mortification to her to see the coolness with which the old man pocketed the difference which had caused her such mortal throes.

This anecdote of herself I heard in the year 1800 from the mouth of the late Mrs. Crawford,* then sixty-seven years of age (she died soon after); and to her struggles upon this childish occasion I have sometimes ventured to think her indebted for that power of rending the heart in the representation of conflicting emotions for which in after years she was considered as little inferior (if at all so in the part of Lady Randolph) even to Mrs. Siddons.

ANECDOTE OF A QUACK DOCTOR.

Walking about the town of Warren, Ohio, during the early part of a day on the evening of which I was to give a reading, my attention was attracted by a crowd gathered around a smart turnout consisting of a gayly-painted half carriage, half peddler's wagon, to which were attached a pair of dashing black horses in tawdry harness with silver-plated mountings.

A man was addressing the crowd from the driving-box of the vehicle. He was dressed in black, but wore a wide-brimmed white hat, from which flowed the long ends of a broad blue ribbon. His

* The maiden name of this lady was Street, which she changed, by successive marriages, for those of Dancer, Barry, and Crawford. She was Mrs. Crawford, and a third time a widow, when I knew her.

beard and hair were black, and evidently false. Such expressions as the following struck my ear as I stood upon the curb of the opposite pavement:

"You, sir, you have a liver. You feel it, I have no doubt, and I know, by the white of your eye being so yellow—pardon the bull—you are bilious; which means you have too much bile." Then came a flood of words, in which I could distinguish now and then "chyle—bile—gall—liver—stomach—churning—secretions—obstructions—improper assimilations—blood-vessels gorged—head giddy—bad humor—quarrel with sweetheart—scold wife—bad temper; can't help it—send for doctor—big bill—no cure. True remedy, this box I hold in my hand, the poor man's friend—cure at once—instant relief—made happy in four-and-twenty-hours—no trouble with wife or sweetheart or friend—*shake hands with self* every morning. And only twenty-five cents!"

Then followed a roar of laughter, and hands were extended in all directions for the magic boxes, when the speaker wound up with, "All gone, ladies and gentlemen—not even 'one more left,' as the razor-man says. Go home—get more—be back this afternoon. Grateful for favors—public interest at heart. Till then humble servant. Good-bye." A low bow, and off went the doctor and his spanking blacks with the travelling pill-shop.

As I walked home to my tavern I could not get rid of the idea that all this adroitly-managed ex-

hibition had a smack of the stage about it. It brought to my memory an old farce called *Rochester*, in which a mountebank plays just such tricks. As I walked down the long entry-way to my room in the tavern I observed a large poster tacked on to a door, bearing an inscription stating that Doctor Veritas was "At home to the afflicted."

Just then the door opened, several persons passed out, and I found my hand grasped by a man in a showy morning-gown and a black velvet cap, who warmly greeted me with, "Mr. Murdoch, my old friend!" I soon recognized in the quack doctor a former actor of what is called the "heavy business" in some of the theatres in which I had performed.

His story was, that being out of an engagement he had taken up with an itinerant pill-vendor who was in a consumption and needed an apt speaker to sell his commodities. The man soon died, and my friend of the buskin became heir to his effects and business, and, finding his new profession most profitable, had continued to cry out his medical nostrums rather than return to the spouting of blank verse.

CHAPTER XVII.

LONDON THEATRICAL SENSATIONS.

A NEW departure from the direct line of theatrical mannerism was exhibited in the case of Master Betty the boy-actor. The father of this prodigy instructed him in elocution and fencing when he was only ten years old. At that age he manifested great strength of will and decision of character, and upon seeing Mrs. Siddons perform Elvira in the play of *Pizarro* he expressed a determination to become an actor, affirming that he would sooner die than not go on the stage. His father, a man of independent circumstances, was much surprised, but decided not to thwart his inclination, and continued his instruction, until at length Master Betty made his appearance at Belfast, August 11, 1803, being then about eleven years old. He took the town by storm, was called an "infant Garrick," and the Belfast ladies pronounced him "a darling." He was received with similar enthusiasm in Cork, Waterford, Londonderry, Dublin, and other cities, the houses being crowded wherever he appeared. Fame heralded his approach to Edinburgh and Glasgow, while fortune continued to smile and the critics declared

that he displayed all the powers of Garrick, Cooke, or Kemble. He came to London, and the excitement was no less intense. Gentlemen were crushed in the pit and ladies fainted in the boxes.

The public verdict may be summed up in the fact that "Old Gentleman Smith," the original Charles Surface, gave him a seal bearing the likeness of Garrick, which Garrick in his last illness had charged him to keep until he should meet with a player who acted from *nature* and *feeling*. Smith pronounced him the proper person to receive the precious relic. It is said that on a motion made by Mr. Pitt the House of Commons adjourned one night and went down to the theatre to see him act Hamlet. He continued to play for two seasons, and retired with a splendid fortune.

It seems as though Master Betty took possession of the stage very much as Blind Tom did of the platform. His success was not the result of cultivation, but a natural gift, of which the people knew nothing save that it filled them with wonder and delight. He seemed to have been the embodiment of passion—a master of words, but not of ideas. Instinct and ardor enabled him to take on the semblance of feeling as the chameleon receives the color of the object to which it clings. He learned words as the parrot does, by rote, and caught their meaning from the voice of his preceptor. A talent for expressive speech and graceful action made him the most comprehensive and perfect mimic of Nature that ever dazzled an audience. It is said that he learned the part of

Hamlet in three days, and yet, though so quick at catching words, he always dropped his *h's*. He had seen but little acting before he appeared upon the boards, but it is probable that his father knew something of stage-business and the modes of expressive utterance peculiar to popular actors, and that he reproduced the intonations and inflections he caught from the recitals of his instructor. The most attractive element, however, in Master Betty's performance must have been the quality and force of his vocality. He was fresh and natural, unlike all other favorites, and therefore there could be no comparison. He was himself alone. He had a wonderful memory, self-possession, and elegance of manner, and it would seem that he acted as he felt, like a boy, and with the reckless adventure of a boy, without the fear of criticism, he entered upon his work with a love of its excitement. Without knowledge of the underlying principles of dramatic action, he trusted entirely to the conviction that he was a law unto himself and not answerable to any dictation but that of his own will. Had he been old or artful enough to copy any existing model, he would have thereby restricted his natural efforts and deadened his effects. As long as the ardor of youth prompted his action, it was brilliant and effective, but when the boy passed on toward maturity, with a realizing sense of circumstances and responsibility came a diminution of self-reliance and a restriction of impulse. As he merely practised the functions of acting, without studying the art or its principles, experience was

of no value, and the flame of inspiration gradually faded and at last died out.

A CONTEMPORANEOUS OPINION OF MASTER BETTY THE BOY-ACTOR.

"Just at this time," says Reynolds, "the whole theatrical world was in commotion at the expected arrival of Master Betty, whose celebrity was so excessive that, though unseen and untried on the London stage, it was with truth averred that not a place could be procured for his first six nights. One evening during the run of *The Blind Bargain*, whilst sitting in the first circle shortly after the commencement of the second act, a gentleman and a very pretty boy, apparently about eleven years of age, entered the box and seated themselves close to me. The former, among various other theatrical questions, asked which was Kemble, which was Lewis, and seemed eagerly to devour my replies, while the boy, engaged in the more important occupation of devouring an orange, seemed as inattentive and indifferent to mine and his protector's conversation as to the proceedings on the stage. Between the inquisitiveness of the one and the listlessness of the other, I myself was fast approaching a torpid, ennuye state, when one of the fruit-women entered the box and whispered to me that I was sitting between Master and Mr. Betty.—'How do you know?' quoth I.—'From the superintendent of the free list,' she rejoined, 'to whom they gave their names.'

"Now, aware that this little phenomenon, this small—or rather great—snowball, which had been made at Belfast and had rolled on, attaining through every town additional magnitude till it reached Birmingham, was advertised to appear on the following Monday as Achmet in *Barbarossa*, I began to believe the truth of the fruit-woman's information. Consequently, curiosity induced me to take another peep, when at this moment the door was burst open and hundreds, deserting their boxes, attempted to rush into ours. The pressure became so extremely formidable, that Mr. Betty, in considerable alarm, called loudly for the boxkeeper, who not being able to come on account of the crowd, I urgently requested the terrified father and son to submit themselves to my guidance; and they, complying, followed me to the box-door. The crowd, imagining that they should have a better view of this *parvus redivivus* Garrick in the lobby, made way for us right and left, when I delivered them into the hands of Hill the boxkeeper, who opened a door leading behind the scenes, and making them enter it the *pack* were suddenly 'at fault,' and the pursued took safe shelter in the cover of the greenroom.

"Some years after the expiration of this absurd mania I became acquainted with Mr. Betty, and, during a negotiation with him relative to an engagement at Covent Garden Theatre I found that he possessed as much liberality and as little vanity as any gentleman with whom I have had the pleasure to be acquainted. But, though I give this

suffrage to the amiable qualities of his manhood, I cannot say as much for the histrionic qualities of his boyhood, when, instead of joining with the enthusiastic majority devoted to him, I openly avowed myself one of the opposing minority, and consequently led a life of argument and tumult. As a specimen: During the height of the Roscius rage, dining for the first time at Sir Frederick Eden's house in Pall Mall, where there were as many fine ladies as fine gentlemen, Master Betty was naturally the leading—nay, the exclusive—subject of conversation. An elderly lady, sighing and throwing up her eyes toward the ceiling, exclaimed, 'I fear, I fear we shall soon lose him,' evidently thinking, I presume, with Shakespeare,

> So wise, so young, they say, do ne'er live long.

Another enthusiast, fanning herself, asserted with much indignation that she had no patience with John Kemble, for when his asthma was in its very worst state, instead of nursing himself at home, he came into his box, as if purposely for the chance of coughing down his paramount opponent. A third said to a lady near to her, 'I saw your dear boy to-day, and how I do envy you! Certainly he most strongly resembles the divine Master Betty.'

"I actually writhed under all this ecstatic nonsense, and my suppressed tortures arose to an almost ungovernable height when I heard several of the male idolaters add encomiums of an equally extravagant nature. At length Sir Frederick Eden said, 'Reynolds, why are you silent? From

your long theatrical experience you must no doubt have formed a good opinion on this subject.'—'Indeed! a dramatic author in the room?' said an old gentleman. 'Now, ladies, we shall have fresh beauties discovered.—Perhaps, sir, you remember Garrick and Henderson?' I bowed assent. 'Now, sir, I ask you, upon your honor, does not the boy surpass both?'—'Oh, certainly,' was the self-satisfied murmur through the room.—'No, sir,' I replied, bursting with rage. 'I answer, upon my honor, that he does not; for, with all due deference to what has been said, I doubt whether he can even pronounce the very word by which he lives.'—'And pray, sir,' they simultaneously demanded, 'what may that word be?'—To which, more and more provoked, I boldly replied, almost at the risk of my personal safety, 'Humbug!'

"Here I was interrupted by a yell so terrific that probably I should have been inclined to qualify or soften this bold assertion had I not seen, by the secret signs and encouraging nods of my worthy host, that he completely agreed with me; so I continued gallantly to defend myself against the attacks of my numerous and tumultuous assailants until the blue-stocking part of this cabal sent me to Coventry. Shortly afterward they retired, leaving me and the male portion of the company with Sir Frederick, who now openly expressed his accordance in my opinions, and, laughing, gave me joy and said, 'Pan quits the plain, but Pol remains.'

"However, my triumph was but temporary, for

this was *one* of the houses to which I was never invited a second time.

"But, to conclude this subject: to Master Betty, as a boy and a bad actor, the whole town flocked; to Mister Betty, as a man and a good second-rate actor, scarcely an individual came; yet, for once, the foolery of fashion had beneficial results, since in the present case it provided for the after-life of a most amiable young man and his family."

A DOG MANIA.

As London raved in ecstatic fervor over Garrick and titled equipages rolled in crowds to Goodman's Fields, so kings and royal dukes and the "quality," together with the critics and the "town," all flocked to the Betty carnival. While showing their admiration for all that was famous or fashionable, the flood of the royal and popular tide set in the direction of Spa Fields under the influence of the dramatic "dog mania."

Reynolds says: "A subordinate but enterprising actor of the name of Costello collected at the great fairs of Frankfort and Leipsic a complete company of canine performers, and arriving with them in England, Wroughton, then manager of Saddler's Wells, engaged him and his wonderful troop. They were fourteen in all, and, unlike those straggling dancing-dogs still occasionally seen in the streets, they all acted respondently and conjointly with a truth that appeared almost the effect of reason. The 'star,' the real star, of

the company was an actor named Moustache, and the piece produced as a vehicle for its first appearance was called *The Deserter*. The night I was present at this performance Saddler's Wells, in point of fashion, resembled the opera-house on a Saturday night during the height of the season; princes, peers, puppies, and pickpockets all crowding to see what Jack Churchill, with his accustomed propensity to punning, used to term the illustrious dog-*stars*.

"On this evening the late Duke of Gloucester was also present. Wroughton, who at that time frequently played at Drury Lane the parts of Lear, Evander, and other aged characters, was now, as manager of Saddler's Wells, dressed in court costume, and, looking his real age—about thirty-five—lighted His Royal Highness to his box. 'Eh? how?' exclaimed the duke—'who, what are you?'—'My name is Wroughton, please Your Royal Highness.'—'Oh! what?' rejoined the duke—'son of *old* Wroughton of Drury Lane?'

"Wroughton, who told me of this whimsical error, said that at first he knew not whether to receive it as an affront or as a compliment; however, affecting to consider it as the latter, he paid the duke his acknowledgments for unconsciously avowing that his assumption of old age was not distinguishable from the reality.

"The curtain shortly afterward rose. I will pass over the performance till the last scene, merely remarking that the actors, Simpkin, Skirmish, and Louisa, were so well dressed and so

much in earnest that in a slight degree they actually preserved the interest of the story and the illusion of the scene. But Moustache as the deserter! I see him now in his little uniform, military boots, with smart musket and helmet, cheering and inspiring his fellow-soldiers to follow him up scaling-ladders and storm the fort. The roars, barking, and confusion which resulted from this attack may be better imagined than described.

"At the moment when the gallant assailants seemed secure of victory a retreat was sounded, and Moustache and his adherents were seen receding from the repulse, rushing down the ladders, and then staggering toward the lamps in a state of panic and dismay.

"'How was this grand military manœuvre so well managed?' probably asks the reader. I will tell him. These great performers had had no food since breakfast, and knowing that a fine hot supper, unseen by the audience, was placed for them at the top of the fort, they naturally speeded toward it, all hope and exultation; when, just as they were about to commence operations, Costello and his assistants commenced theirs, and by the smacking of whips and other threats drove the terrified combatants back in disgrace. This brings to my recollection what old Astley, the circus-manager, once whimsically said to the late Mr. Harris: 'Why do my performers act so much better than yours? Because mine know if they don't indeed work like horses I give them no corn; whereas if your performers do or do not

walk over the course, they have their prog just the same.'

"Wroughton frequently told me that he cleared upward of seven thousand pounds by these four-legged Roscii."

AUGUSTUS ADAMS THE TRAGEDIAN.

One of the many imitators of Mr. Forrest had become so imbued with his mode of utterance and intonation, so perfectly like him in manner, that it was difficult to determine at an early period in their history which was the better. And to those who did not know their antecedents it would have been difficult to determine which was the original. I refer to Mr. Augustus Adams. He began to adopt the mannerisms of Mr. Forrest at the outset of his career, and fell into his mode so readily that any one hearing him in ordinary conversation, without seeing him, could not possibly have told whether Mr. Forrest or Mr. Adams was the speaker.

Mr. Adams was an actor of much talent, and had he relied on his own expressive intonation and quality of voice, instead of moulding himself after the fashion of another, he would have reached a still higher degree of excellence than that which, in the minds of many, made him a rival of Mr. Forrest. In person he was taller than, and quite as commanding as, Mr. Forrest, and his features were quite as fine and imposing. But, unfortu-

nately, at an early period he fell a victim to intemperance.

One night, after playing Hamlet in Pittsburg, he walked into a restaurant kept by one Mr. Beals, a well-known wag, who was also in the habit of imitating Mr. Forrest, but after the extravagant manner of many who merely ridiculed his peculiarities. It was his custom to have a side-table well supplied with a collation of cold beef, tongue, smoked codfish, and pickles, with the inevitable tin pan of cold baked pork and beans, for the enjoyment of those who dropped in to take a drink before retiring for the night. Mr. Adams was wrapped in the ample folds of his Spanish cloak, and in deep chest-tones* said, "Mr. Beals, I am rather tired and hungry, and feel like having a taste of your pork and beans before I take my toddy." To which Mr. Beals, in still deeper Forrestian tones, which seemed to issue from the very depths of his capacious chest, replied, "Mr. Adams, I am sorry to say that you have come too late for your favorite dish. The beans are all gone, but here at your service is the *tin pan*," at the same time holding out the empty vessel with a shake of the head and the chin pressed down upon the breast, in an attitude most provokingly suggestive of the

* Churchill says of an actor—

"Can none remember?—yes, I know all must—
When in the Moor he ground his teeth to dust.
* * * * *
His voice, in one dull, deep, unvaried sound,
Seems to break forth from caverns underground;
From hollow chest the low, sepulchral note
Unwilling heaves and struggles in his throat."

manner of the great actor. This was received with laughter and applause by the spectators, and afforded a striking exhibition of the two qualities of imitation and mimicry.

It has been said that actors often forget themselves so as to lose entirely their own identity in the part they are assuming. I do not believe, however, that such abstraction is ever so complete as to prevent at least a mechanical observance of all the material parts of stage-business. I remember upon one occasion, when Mr. Charles Kean was acting Hamlet and I Horatio, he made a pause in the scene, and, although apparently deeply absorbed, said in a stage-whisper, "Good heavens! what noise is that?" I replied in an undertone, "It is only the ticking of the greenroom clock."—"Oh dear! what a nuisance!" he whispered, and proceeded with his part, the audience not seeming to have noticed the interruption or heard the side-speeches. After some time, in the same scene, he again paused and said in an irritable undertone, "Can't they stop that clock?" All this was done without any apparent interference with his feelings or expression.

In my own experience, while delivering the most absorbing soliloquies, I have been compelled to improvise "stage-business" in order to walk to a place from which I could be heard by people who were talking behind the scenes and hiss out between my teeth, "Stop that noise!" And yet I have never in any such case been conscious of the slightest interference with the state of my mind

in relation to the part I was playing, or disturbance of the drift of my voice in the utterance of the author's language.

MR. MACREADY AT REHEARSAL.

Mr. Macready has been known to keep up what might be called a running accompaniment of whispered directions to the subordinates on the scene and denunciations against offending parties all through busy situations in the action of the play requiring on his own part the utmost self-forgetfulness and intense tragic feeling. His peculiar manner of interlarding his speeches with muttered interjections and other expressions quite foreign to the language of the part was amusingly illustrated under the following circumstances:

One day, at the rehearsal of a new play in which he had to deliver a long harangue to an excited populace, who were to respond to his addresses with approving shouts and occasional replies, Mr. Macready came near convulsing the whole company with laughter, in spite of their respect for the manager and the deference they usually paid to his authoritative manner. The play was *Philip Van Artevelde*, for which, however, I shall here substitute, as more familiar, that of *Julius Cæsar*. The scene presents a crowd of citizens grouped around a platform on which the speaker stands. Those to whom he more particularly directs his remarks are on the orator's right hand. Conspicuous among these is one who has the most to

say, and on this occasion he was represented by a new member of the company, who was totally unaccustomed to the tragedian's manner of conducting rehearsals. He was, moreover, of a nervous temperament, and in the habit when excited of making a gesture very suggestive, to speak plainly, of wiping his nose in a kind of school-boy fashion, accompanied with a snuffle. An extraordinary effort to bring order out of the chaos of a stageful of minor actors and supernumeraries had made Mr. Macready even more impatient than usual, and it must be borne in mind that he had fallen into a way of giving his stage-directions and explanations in a tone of voice pitched in much the same key as that in which he delivered the language of the character.

The extract is from Act Third, Scene Second, of the tragedy, and commences with Mark Antony's reference to Cæsar's will:

MARK ANTONY.

But here's a parchment with the seal of Cæsar;
I found it in his closet; 'tis his will:
Let but the commons hear this testament—
Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read—
And they would go and kiss dead Cæsar's wounds,
And dip their napkins in his sacred blood;
Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,
And, dying, mention it within their wills
Bequeathing it, as a rich legacy
Unto their issue.

ROMAN CITIZEN.

We'll hear the will; read it, Mark Antony.
The will! the will! we will hear Cæsar's will.

MARK ANTONY.

[No, sir, no, sir, that won't do! You must speak louder, sir; Roman citizens were very imperative persons when they were getting the upper hand in public affairs.]

Have patience, gentle friends, I must not read it;
It is not meet you know how Cæsar loved you;
You are not wood, you are not stones, but men;
And, being men, hearing the will of Cæsar,
It will inflame you, it will make you mad:
'Tis good you know not that you are his heirs;
For if you should, oh what would come of it?

ROMAN CITIZEN.

Read the will; we will hear it, Antony:
You shall read us the will, Cæsar's will.

MARK ANTONY.

[No, sir, no, you have not got it yet, sir. You were as much too loud in your last lines as you were too low in the first speech. There is a happy medium, sir, between extremes, sir. Try to strike it, sir; and don't wipe your nose, for Heaven's sake!]

Will you be patient? will you stay a while?
I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it.
I fear I wrong the honorable men
Whose daggers have stabbed Cæsar: I do fear it.

ROMAN CITIZEN.

They were traitors: honorable men!

MARK ANTONY.

[No, no, no—*no*, sir! They could not be traitors and honorable men too. You must sneer at "honorable men," sir, and make it appear they were *not* "honorable men."]

ROMAN CITIZEN.

They were traitors! not honorable men!

MARK ANTONY.

[Sir! sir! you misunderstand me! And, good Heavens! there you are wiping your nose again!]

ROMAN CITIZEN.

[I am not wiping my nose, Mr. Macready; that is, I am not aware that I am wiping my nose. You make me so nervous, sir, I don't know what I *am* doing.]

MARK ANTONY.

[Well, don't do it, sir—don't do it again. Where is the other citizen?—Oh yes. Speak, sir.]

CITIZEN.

The will! the testament!

ROMAN CITIZEN.

(*Now indignantly excited, which makes him wipe his nose more furiously than ever, and in a somewhat defiant tone of voice.*)

They were villains, murderers: the will! read the will!

MARK ANTONY.

[There, sir! there, sir! that will do, sir.—Prompter, cast another person for this Roman Citizen—one who has not the beastly habit of snuffling and rubbing his nose—and forfeit the gentleman who is rehearsing the part a night's salary for conduct unbecoming an actor.]

Here Mr. Macready came down from the stand, bowed to the company, and disappeared into his dressing-room, while the stage-manager dismissed the actors and announced the rehearsal of the tragedy for the following morning.

A QUAINT ACTOR AND AN OLD CUSTOM.

We are told of a performer of the last century named Wignell who was so doubly refined that he

could not deliver an ordinary message without trying to make blank verse of it. "Wignell," said Garrick, "why can't you say, 'Mr. Strickland, your coach is ready,' as an ordinary man would say it, and not with the declamatory pomp of Mr. Quin or Mr. Booth when playing tyrants?"—"Sir," said poor Wignell, "I thought in that passage I *had* kept down the sentiment." That he never could do; his Doctor in *Macbeth* was so wonderfully solemn that his audience was always in fits of laughter at it.

The old fashion of speaking a prologue had been set aside. One evening at the Covent Garden Theatre the curtain rose for a performance of the tragedy of *Cato*, and the play began without the usual poetic preface. The audience, jealous of their rights, set up a shout of "Prologue! prologue!" That eccentric actor, Wignell, was then on the stage as Portius, and in his fantastically pompous way had pronounced the opening passage of his part—

> The dawn is overcast, the morning lowers,
> And heavily, with clouds, brings on the day—

when he was interrupted by renewed vociferations for the prologue. Wignell would neither depart from his character nor leave the audience without satisfactory explanation, and accordingly, after the word "day," without changing features or tone, he solemnly went on with this interpolation:

> [Ladies and gentlemen, there has not been
> For years a prologue spoken to this play]—

> The great, the important day, big with the fate
> Of Cato and of Rome.

STORIES OF SUPERNUMERARIES.

About 1835 I was a member of the company at the Tremont Theatre, Boston, performing secondary characters in tragedy and comedy. There were also two gentlemen there, Messrs. Adams and Benson, employed in what was termed the "utility" line of business, and who went on as guards, citizens, or senators. Both were somewhat under middle stature—in fact, they were very small men. They were considered regular actors, and required to attend rehearsals, subject to the prompter's call, but were usually detailed for the delivery of messages, to stand as sentries, or to arrest and carry off persons obnoxious to dramatic authority. Mr. Forrest in many of his characters, as my readers will remember, was subjected to tyrannical treatment and delivered over to officers and guards, and consequently often fell into the hands of Messrs. Adams and Benson. One morning, while rehearsing the part of Damon in the play of *Damon and Pythias*, when Dionysius the tyrant calls upon his guards to seize the noble Roman who is about to strike at his life, as Mr. Forrest rushed furiously toward the tyrant with uplifted dagger, he was ruthlessly seized by the two myrmidons of the law, the two gentlemen to whom I have referred, whose hands were firmly fixed upon his wrists and shoulders, holding him with a determined grasp. For a moment he stood

gazing deliberately and alternately upon the diminutive obstructors of just vengeance, and then, releasing himself, he called to the manager, Mr. Barry, and said in measured tones of solemn remonstrance, "Sir, this thing is becoming supremely ridiculous, and I must protest against a repetition of such incongruity. No sooner am I ordered into durance vile than upon all occasions these two *under-sized* gentlemen—I beg their pardon—rush forth and seize me. I say again, I must protest against their performance of duties for which their bodily proportions render them totally unfit, turning what should be a tragic effect into a mere farce." The effect of this harangue, delivered in Mr. Forrest's well-known voice and manner, it is almost impossible to describe. For a long time these gentlemen were regarded as the only members of the profession who had dared to "beard the lion in his den."

Subordinate performers, however, may sometimes possess more physical power than is desirable.

Mr. Augustus Adams, when performing Lear, was once subjected to very rough treatment at the hands of what are termed "supernumeraries." He had instructed them to approach at a certain part of his speech and raise him gently from his knees, when he would throw himself into their arms, and then, and not till then, they were to bear him away. But in the performance of the play, when he fell upon his knees, and before he had more than merely commenced the utterance

of the curse, his over-zealous attendants approached and raised him up. The exasperated father in an undertone exclaimed, "Go away! let me alone!" but, misunderstanding his order, and only realizing that something was wrong, they lifted him off his feet and in spite of his frantic exclamations, struggling and kicking, they bore him from the stage. All this time the audience were applauding—some of them doubtless appreciating the blunder, but others considering the whole matter a new and effective point of stage-business, while, in all probability, the attendants received in full force the curse which was to have been pronounced upon his daughter by the infuriated king.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LONDON EXPERIENCES.

IN 1856, my health being very much impaired, I determined to take a trip to Europe, thinking it possible that while in England I might be able to fulfil a long-cherished desire to appear upon the London boards. In company with my eldest daughter I took passage on a Cunard steamer from Boston, and, after experiencing the usual pleasures and discomforts incident to a sea-voyage, we arrived in Liverpool. From thence we started upon a tour planned from the friendly suggestions of Mr. James T. Fields and the late Mr. George S. Hillard of Boston, whose experience and good judgment indicated such routes and points of interest as rendered our travel in the British islands the perfection of sight-seeing.

The antique walled city of Chester and "grand old York," with its time-honored ruins and historic edifices, were among the first places we visited; we next saw the land of Scott and Burns, the Trossachs, Loch Katrine, and watery Lomond, Edinburgh, and Stirling Castle, and then Dublin and Donnybrook Fair, an extraordinary scene of Irish fun; which, by the by, we were told,

in consequence of the omission of some formality which should have preceded its opening, would be held no more. After this we went to Abbotsford, saw Melrose by moonlight, and finally arrived at the mighty metropolis and entered upon a course of London sight-seeing, to which I was able to devote my entire time, for, by the advice of Mr. Hillard, I had brought no letters of introduction to social or literary celebrities. A previous acquaintance in my own country with Messrs. Buckstone and Chippendale—the former the proprietor, and the latter the stage-manager, of the Haymarket Theatre—rendered the consummation of my professional plans comparatively easy, and an application for an "opening" was readily granted by Mr. Buckstone, who immediately appointed a date and announced my early appearance "from the theatres of the United States," under an engagement for a limited number of nights. The company being organized especially for the production of comedy, it was determined that I should appear as Young Mirabel in Farquhar's play entitled *The Inconstant; or, Wine Works Wonders*, which I had arranged for modern representation.

The success attending my first performance was such as to authorize the management to announce the repetition of the comedy until further notice. After holding possession of the stage for a month, it was withdrawn in order to introduce *Wild Oats*, in which I appeared as Rover and Mr. Buckstone as Sim.

It will not be out of place here to record an act of courtesy on the part of Mr. Chippendale, who before the rehearsal of *The Inconstant*, addressing the ladies and gentlemen of the company, said: "In the arrangement of the business of the old comedies in which Mr. Murdoch is to appear I shall not exercise my authority in stage-supervision, but request you to observe his directions;" adding, "These old plays have been so long on the shelf that their business, once quite familiar to the profession, has been in a great degree forgotten; and, having examined the prompt-books Mr. Murdoch has furnished, I find them to be so well marked that Mr. Buckstone and I have concluded that it is merely just that our American visitor should himself direct the situations of the scenes in which he is particularly interested." In consequence of this announcement, and the polite acquiescence of the ladies and gentlemen concerned, my rehearsals at the Haymarket were productive of more real satisfaction than I had ever before enjoyed in the discharge of the responsible duties of a stage-director. My experience under the management of Mr. DeCamp —to which I have heretofore had occasion to refer—had made me acquainted with the stage-business of Messrs. Lewis and Elliston, who had acquired celebrity in many characters under the instruction of the authors who had originated them. Mr. DeCamp was quite familiar with the manner of these distinguished actors, and had followed their example in several parts of which he

was fond, while I was performing subordinate characters; and thus under his instruction I learned and carefully treasured up a knowledge of practical details which was of much value, enabling me to tread in the footsteps of bygone celebrities without subjecting myself to the charge of imitation. The critics affirmed that while I looked and moved like many of their old favorites, my voice and speech were entirely unlike theirs.

But, however auspicious the opening of my London career seemed to be, an unpleasant incident that occurred soon after proved to me the truth of the old saying that "He that plucks the rose must feel the thorn."

At the first rehearsal of *Wild Oats* I found that Mr. Buckstone had not been in the habit of having Sim come on in what is termed the "play-scene." But when I informed him that I had arranged some "business" in which I had been accustomed to have Sim take a part, he promised to comply with my wishes. In order to give a correct view of the situation I will briefly state that at the close of the fourth act Lamp the manager appears on the scene, with the servants dressed as the characters of the "play" in which Rover has induced Lady Amaranth to take a part for her amusement and that of her household. Sir George Thunder, annoyed at the conduct of his niece in introducing such abominations as theatricals into his house, breaks up the intended rehearsal with opprobrious epithets, using his cane quite freely on the offending servants. In this

hubbub I had arranged that Sim should appear, dressed grotesquely in a mongrel suit of Roman armor, and that Sir George should meet and belabor him with his cane, while he should defend himself with a kitchen-spit, until he was knocked down and beaten off after the fashion of Falstaff in the robbery-scene. At this juncture Rover, who is laughing and applauding the performance, comes in the way of Sir George, who inadvertently gives him a blow as he is driving Sim off the stage.

This was the introduction Mr. Buckstone had approved, and accordingly rehearsed. But the matter was entirely new to him, and, as he was very deaf, at night when the boy "called for the scene" in the greenroom, he did not hear him, and consequently failed to make his appearance at the critical moment. The result was that while Sir George was beating the servants, and I was trying to draw the attention of the prompter to Mr. Buckstone's absence, in the flurry of the moment Mr. Chippendale, who personated Sir George, struck at me as he left the stage in such an undemonstrative manner that I was quite unconscious of having received the blow; so that when, in the order of the scene, I came to deliver my exit speech, in which I expressed a determination to chastise Sir George, and which should be uttered in great indignation, I was unable to give it in that burst of passion which takes the hero off with éclat and usually "brings down the house."

The next day the London *Times*—which had bestowed the highest praises on my manner of resenting the insult in the bravo-scene of *The Inconstant*—took me to task for tamely submitting to an affront in *Wild Oats*, intimating that it evinced an apparent lack of sensibility not consistent with the character of a generous young Englishman like Rover; but the other papers, in a proper spirit, did not notice what must have appeared a mere accident, and therefore to be overlooked.

Mr. Oxenford, the critic of *The Times*, who was an experienced observer of dramatic effects, certainly knew that something had occurred to mar the proper climax of the scene, and should have omitted any remark which could have been construed to be a reflection on the personal sensibility of a performer, although merely intended as a rebuke for professional inefficiency.

Mr. Buckstone acknowledged himself to blame, and expressed regret that Sim's negligence should have caused his friend Rover to be subjected to the unwarranted suspicion of having received an affront which he "put in his pocket."

The next *revival*, as my performances were styled, was of the comedy of *The Dramatist*, which had not been acted for a third of a century. Neither the actors nor the audience were familiar with its incidents or language, and therefore the initial performance was of the nature of "a first night." Mr. Buckstone cast himself for Ennui—a *slow* part, and, though quaint in character, not

in his peculiar line. But the comedy was a success, from the fact that it exaggerated the follies and foibles of a past generation. Although the audience did not get at the pith of the matter as readily as they had at that of the "previous comedies," we played *The Dramatist* for a week or so, during which time I realized the true state of affairs, which was mainly this: Mr. Buckstone did not like Ennui, and felt that he should have acted the part of Vapid; which, by the by, I wondered he had not thought of studying before I had proposed to play it. But there was a still bigger "bee in the bonnet" of my friend the manager, whose buzzing more seriously disturbed his usual placidity. I had observed during the run of *The Dramatist* that morning rehearsals were in progress in which a large amount of china and other furniture was to be demolished, and that Mr. Buckstone was to act the part which was to do the smashing. Now, as Vapid breaks china unlimitedly in *The Dramatist*, I saw at a glance that there was trouble ahead. The new entertainment was written by Mr. Oxenford, who was urging its immediate production on account of forthcoming novelties which he felt would interfere with its success. It became necessary, therefore, that my demolition of crockery must cease, as the breakage in the first part of the evening's performance would naturally interfere with the effect of repeated crashes on the same night; and in order to prepare the public for a withdrawal of *The Dramatist*, and at the same time not to damage my attraction in the

character in which I was next to appear, it was deemed expedient to lay the blame upon the old comedy, and not upon the new performer.

The following article, which appeared in the London *Punch*, will give the reader a hint concerning the many methods by which the public are entertained, while at the same time desirable publicity is given without an ordinary advertisement. Upon an expression of my doubts as to the animus of the article, Mr. Buckstone assured me that it was written in the kindest spirit possible, and meant to be complimentary, and that it was in every way calculated to advance both my interest and his own. I afterward heard that it had been written by Mr. Thackeray, and, as I had through the influence of that gentleman received the compliment of an election to an honorary membership in the old Garrick Club, I felt that it was intended only to be funny:

PARNASSUS POLICE-OFFICE.*

Yesterday an individual of very gentlemanly exterior, of the name of Murdoch, was brought before the worthy magistrate of this office, charged with the reproduction, from a very musty shelf, of one Vapid, known some three-quarters of a century ago as *The Dramatist*, to the great annoyance, if not worse, of a crowd of persons in the Haymarket. Mr. Baldwin Buckstone was also charged as an accomplice.

Mr. Brown proved the fact of the reproduction. He had seen the Vapid as exposed at the Haymarket Theatre. It was a very painful exhibition. Mrs. Brown, his wife, a woman of a very lively disposition, accompanied him, and (here the witness appeared greatly distressed) had never smiled since.

* London *Punch*, Nov. 8, 1856.

Mr. Jones had, unfortunately for himself, been present at the exhibition in question. He said "unfortunately," inasmuch as it had cost him a situation of fifty pounds a year.

The worthy magistrate desired the witness to explain himself.

Mr. Jones had no objection. The fact was, he had held the situation of clerk in a mercantile house of very severe principles in the City. On leaving *The Dramatist* he felt as though he had been drugged—"hocussed," he believed was the word. He went to bed, and ought, as was his custom, to have risen at seven, but was so much overpowered by what he had swallowed at the Haymarket that it took his wife, his mother-in-law, the housemaid, and the charwoman, all together, to wake him. He did not reach the city until an hour after time, and the partners of the firm (they were strenuous hearers of Mr. Spurgeon), on becoming acquainted with the cause of his somnolency, resolutely showed him to the door; in fact, discharged him. He still felt very weak indeed from what he had taken at the Haymarket.

Mr. Robinson deposed that he had seen Vapid, and that he thought the exhibition a very daring attempt on the proverbial good-nature of a British audience. In a sanitary point of view he believed that such an exposure was attended with the worst results, inasmuch as it tended to create depression of the spirits, a sinking of the heart, and extreme melancholy.

Mr. Murdoch, as having reproduced the object in question, begged to be allowed to ask the witness if he could state any one case in which Vapid had so operated.

Mr. Robinson: Certainly. A gentlewoman of my acquaintance, the lady of a distinguished sheriff's officer of the Hebrew persuasion, was present on the first exhibition of *The Dramatist*, and has been in a state of hysteria ever since: even her husband couldn't arrest it.

The worthy magistrate remarked that the case wore a very ugly aspect, and, as it then appeared to him, the accused parties were liable to be punished under the Police Act. However, he would hear what they had to say for themselves; and,

warning them that what they said would be taken down and used against them, desired Murdoch to enter upon his defence. His Worship further observed that Murdoch, as an American, might, if he chose, be examined through a sworn interpreter.

Mr. Murdoch, with a very slight Transatlantic accent and with a light-comedy bow, worth in itself ten pounds a week, said he trusted that a pretty smart study of the snow-white Swan of Avon had, he rather guessed, made him, as far as words went, as thorough a Britisher as His Worship. He thought that in reproducing Vapid he was proving himself a public benefactor. He considered himself the victim of a base conspiracy.

"Hear! hear!" from Mr. Buckstone, who was sharply reminded by the officer of the court that he was not *then* before the footlights.

Mr. Murdoch continued. He believed that his Vapid was a most lively, most soul-stirring person. He had played Vapid at New York for his benefit, when *The Dramatist* was expressly bespoken by the united body of undertakers, who, as a further mark of respect, posted two mutes at the doors of gallery, pit, and boxes.

Mr. Buckstone observed that undertakers were generally the best judges of private boxes. (*Roars of laughter.*)

Mr. Murdoch said he could if he liked, but wouldn't condescend to the act, produce several witnesses who would testify to the overpowering hilarity of his Vapid. One, however, he might name. He alluded then to the respected matron who sold apples, oranges, a bill of the play, etc. in the pit of the Haymarket. She was quite ready to depose that in his great scene—His Worship would, of course, instinctively know that he alluded to the china-closet scene—his Vapid had so far warmed the woman's apple-basket that more than two ginger-beer bottles went off in spontaneous explosion. He thought this the purest, the highest, and the most flattering criticism, because most involuntary and unconscious on the part of the ginger-beer aforesaid.

The magistrate said he would certainly reserve the point

of the ginger-beer in favor of the accused. His Worship then desired to know what Mr. Buckstone had to say in his defence. Vapid had been exhibited on his premises, and he was clearly a party to the exposure.

Mr. Buckstone (amidst shouts of laughter, in which His Worship did not disdain to join) said the fact was he was one of the easiest of managers. He wasn't a tragedy-manager and didn't fine *his cat* for swearing. No; and he didn't walk the stage at rehearsals, and cry "Silence!" when his own boots creaked. No; and when he played his great dagger—he meant his great apple—scene as Sim in the *Wild Oats*, he didn't make his actors and actresses wear list slippers that they mightn't spoil his effects.

The magistrate said Mr. Buckstone was wandering from the point.

Mr. Buckstone said he knew it: "To walk was human, to wander was divine." He could only say that he gloried in his art. He had refused a baronetcy and a visionary income, because hampered with the condition of his quitting the stage. Why *should* he leave the stage? If he'd been made a baronet without conditions, he'd have had "Bart." printed in red in the playbills, with a bloody ☞ pointing to the dignity of—

His Worship said he must really call Mr. Buckstone to his defence.

Mr. Buckstone: Certainly—always attend to the call. Well, then, Murdoch said he knew there was still life in Vapid; but for his (Buckstone's) part, he said, and still thought, there was more life in a blue-bottle fly that was drowned in the small beer of George the Third. The fact was, as he'd said, he was an easy manager; and being at the time occupied with a new Spanish ballet—

His Worship (*with evident interest*): A new Spanish ballet?

Mr. Buckstone: Si, señor—a new Hispaniolian ballet. I shall be very happy to write Your Worship an order for the first night.

His Worship (*with great dignity*): Justice is blind, Mr. Buckstone, and cannot see a ballet.

Mr. Buckstone was about to observe, when—

The worthy magistrate said he had fully considered the case; the public must be protected from such exhibitions as *The Dramatist*, and he should therefore sentence both the prisoners to three months' hard labor (with nobody to see them) in Cumberland's *Wheel of Fortune*.

The parties, through Mr. Nebuchadnezzar of the respected firm of Nebuchadnezzar & Grass, gave notice of appeal.

GOOD ADVICE FROM A VETERAN ACTOR.

A youth whose tastes and habits were yet unformed, and surrounded by influences which were looked upon by a part of the community at least as pernicious, I found in Mr. Wood a judicious counsellor and an exemplary guide, while as a good professional model in the details of stage-action I found him of great value. He was noted for his correct deportment in the daily business of the theatre, and for his knowledge of the situations and effects of all the scenes in the old dramas, where the ladies and gentlemen, as well as the fops and flirts, of the "good society" of the past strutted their brief hour upon the stage. It can hardly be said that he was either elegant or graceful, and yet his carriage displayed the unmistakable traits of the gentleman. He was always dignified and courteous, and his language correct and unaffected. I entertain a grateful recollection of his friendly advice, always freely imparted. He kindly endeavored to impress upon me the importance of avoiding corrupting associations and the many temptations that beset the path of the young actor, especially after the performances of the theatre are over; and he warned

me against the moral damage to be apprehended from companionship with the frequenters of the saloons and restaurants which surround the theatres, and the danger of becoming stale in the public gaze by a too frequent and indiscriminate appearance in familiar haunts in the leisure hours of the day.

I have a distinct recollection of Mr. Wood's impressive manner of pointing his precepts by apt quotations, and especially of his having on one occasion repeated the address of King Henry the Fourth to his son:*

Had I so lavish of my presence been,
So common-hackneyed in the eyes of men,
So stale and cheap to vulgar company,
Opinion, that did help me to the crown,
Had still kept loyal to possession
And left me in reputeless banishment,
A fellow of no mark nor likelihood.
By being seldom seen, I could not stir
But, like a comet, I was wondered at;
That men would tell their children, "This is he;"
Others would say, "Where? Which is Bolingbroke?"
* * * * * *
Thus did I keep my person fresh and new;
My presence, like a robe pontifical,
Ne'er seen but wondered at; and so my state,
Seldom but sumptuous, showed like a feast,
And won by rareness such solemnity.
The skipping king, he ambled up and down
With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits,
* * * * * *
Grew a companion to the common streets,
Enfeoffed himself to popularity;

* First Part of *King Henry the Fourth*, Act III.

That, being daily swallowed by men's eyes,
They surfeited with honey, and began
To loathe the taste of sweetness, whereof a little
More than a little is by much too much.
So, when he had occasion to be seen,
He was but as the cuckoo is in June,
Heard, not regarded.

A DIFFICULTY SOLVED.

Mr. Wood was very fond of cultivating flowers, and especially roses in all their varieties, and he was a great admirer of the wealth of color displayed by the dahlia, which was at that time a novelty and its culture a subject of much interest among amateurs. He had a garden of moderate dimensions, and was devoted to its care—an occupation which, in his judgment, was calculated to promote the love of the bright and beautiful, warm the imagination, and improve the taste for the study of form and color in Nature and Art. His friendly lessons were not lost, and under their influence my early love for such employment was developed and encouraged until it became a source of enjoyment which has never failed. But thorns will grow among the fairest flowers, and, although our companionship was generally so pleasant, its harmony was not entirely free from interruption.

I very well remember on one occasion Mr. Maywood, at that time the directing manager of the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, cut the Gordian knot of a rivalry between Mr. Wood and myself in a very unexpected manner. The comedy of *The Belle's Stratagem* was in rehearsal, and both

Mr. Wood and I, by our articles of engagement, were entitled to the character of Doricourt. Our respective claims were urged with so much warmth that the "cast" was not put up in the greenroom. But the preparations for the comedy went on, the prompter reading the part of Doricourt, until at last the "posted bills" announced the play, and, lo! there appeared a solution of the vexed question, reading thus: "First appearance of Mr. Abbott from the London theatres, who has been engaged expressly to sustain the character of Doricourt."

MUSTARD AND MUTTON-CHOPS.

Mr. Ludlow, of the old firm of Ludlow & Smith, managers in the South and West for nearly half a century, told me the following story of Mr. Cooper the tragedian, with whom he was intimately acquainted.

"Cooper," said he, "had played a fortnight's engagement with us in New Orleans; we had settled up his account after the morning rehearsal, and found the afternoon so far advanced as to render the possibility of our dining at the hotel very questionable, and, as he had some professional matters still to arrange, he suggested that we should go to a favorite eating-house and get a mutton-chop and some roast potatoes—a dinner after the good old English fashion and prepared by an English cook. We accordingly bent our steps to the chop-house indicated, where we found everything, as he had promised, very comfortable,

with an agreeable odor of hot chops pervading the saloon, and tidy waiters dispensing brown stout, pale ale, and half-and-half, 'fresh from the wood,' in glittering mugs. We sat down at a side-table, spread our napkins, and took a refreshing draught of the English malt. The chops were brought on smoking, and, as Cooper said, 'hot and hot,' to which he added, 'You see, Ludlow, we English always stick to the old Cockney saying, "No matter 'ow little the dish may be, let it be 'ot."' Meanwhile he had helped me bountifully, and at it we went with appetite somewhat sharpened by the unusual length of time which had intervened between breakfast and dinner. Cooper had just smacked his lips after the first mouthful of his chop, when I called to the waiter for some mustard.—'Mustard?' said he, holding up his fork, upon which was impaled a morsel of mutton within a few inches of his mouth. 'What, in the name of common sense, do you want with mustard?'—'Why, what should I want with mustard,' said I, taking the pot from the waiter, 'but to put it on my meat?'—'What!' he exclaimed, 'eat mustard with mutton-chops?—Waiter, take it away. The man's insane; he does not know what he is doing.'—'Not a bit of it,' said I, and proceeded to apply the condiment, when Cooper in a tone of disgust, with his hand extended and resting on the table in a most emphatic manner, said, 'You don't mean to say that you eat mustard with mutton-chops?'—'I do,' said I, suiting the action to the word, 'as you may perceive.' Never did Serjeant

Buzfuz exclaim, 'Chops and tomato-sauce!' in a tone of more unqualified astonishment than that in which Cooper cried out, 'Mutton-chops and mustard! Great Heavens! I have heard of Yankee pork and molasses, but mustard and mutton! I can't stand that, nor will I sit at the table and countenance such barbarity.' I thought he was in jest, and went on munching my meal, but soon saw it was no joke, for, to my surprise, he rose to his feet, threw down his napkin, called for and paid the bill, and with a low bow left me sitting at the table, and went out of the saloon."

Cooper was hot-headed, impulsive, and sometimes overbearing, but he had many redeeming qualities. I learned in a South Carolina city that one day, when passing a place where they were selling a lot of household goods on the sidewalk, he stopped and asked some questions, by which he found that the sale was of a widow's furniture distrained for rent. He stopped the sale, handed the auctioneer the amount of the landlord's claim, with the costs, and went his way.

PICKING UP A "FLAT."

"Whilst we lived in the Adelphi," says Reynolds the dramatist, "Garrick was our opposite neighbor and my father's intimate acquaintance. We frequently used to meet him in John street, and join the little circle collected by his most amusing conversational talents. One wet day I remember Garrick overtaking my father and me

in the most miry part of the city. After the usual salutations he pointed to our white stockings (he himself being booted), and asked us if we had ever heard the story of Lord Chancellor Northington. On our reply in the negative, he told us that one rainy afternoon His Lordship, plainly dressed, walking in Parliament street, picked up a handsome ring, which, according to custom (in past, and I believe in present, times), was immediately claimed by a gentleman ring-dropper, who on receiving his lost treasure appeared so joyful and grateful that he insisted on the unknown finder accompanying him to an adjoining coffee-house to crack a bottle at his (the ring gentleman's) expense.

"Being in the humor for a joke, Lord Northington acceded, and followed him to the coffee-house, where they were shown into a private room, and over the bottle for a time discussed indifferent topics. At length they were joined by certain confederates, and then, hazard being proposed, the Chancellor heard one whisper to another, 'Damn the loaded dice! he is not worth the trouble. *Pick the old flat's pocket at once!*'

"On this the Lord Chancellor discovered himself, and told them if they would frankly confess why they were induced to suppose him so enormous a flat he would probably forget their present misdemeanor. Instantly, with all due respect, they replied, 'We beg Your Lordship's pardon, but whenever we see a gentleman in *white stockings* on a *dirty* day we consider him a capital

pigeon, and pluck his feathers, as we hoped to have plucked Your Lordship's.'

"'Now,' added Garrick, 'leaving you gentlemen to deduce the application, I do myself the honor of wishing you a very good-morning.'"

A STORY OF A HAT.

I remember a very amusing, good-natured fellow who had lived in New York, but at the time of which I write was a resident of Milwaukee and in the employ of the Adams Express Company. He was of the New-York-fireman order, and withal a lover of fun. One of his feats, for his own amusement and that of the good people of the community in which he lived, was to become an amateur actor and perform the part of Mose at the Milwaukee theatre, where he proved to be as expert in dramatic effects as he was known to be in "hitting from the shoulder." Among the laughter-provoking stories for which I was indebted to Jimmy Green (as I shall call him) was the following, which I have no doubt will be esteemed a suitable companion for Garrick's story of "The White Stockings:"

"I had determined," said Green, "to take a run down to New York for a few days and have a good time with 'the b'hoys.' Well, just before going to the dépôt I stopped to take leave of a friend who was in the hat business, and he said to me, 'Why, look here, Jimmy: you can't do a better thing than to buy a hat before you leave.'

He was unpacking a case marked 'Bebee's A, No. 1, Latest Style;' 'And see,' said he, holding up a prime specimen. 'Just look at this, old boy; it takes the shine out of anything this side the Lake. Put it on and take a shy in the glass.'—'No, no,' said I, 'Mr. Jones; it won't do, by no manner of means, to try to palm off a Milwaukee castor on the New York uncles. No, no; I know better than that; I've been there myself, you know.'—'Why, what are you talking about?' said my friend. 'This is a real Bebee A, No. 1, straight from New York—just out—never been on a shelf or a head. Let me put it in a box; carry it with you in the cars, and when you get to New York put it on, and I'll bet you that hat no one will come within a hundred miles of guessing that you bought it in Milwaukee.' Well, you see, I couldn't stand logic like that, so he sold the hat and I paid for it. When I arrived in the city I made up my mind not to be of the sort who are 'taken in and done for' by the sharp fellows who practise on flats; so the first thing I did, after a square meal, was to get a full rig-out, bran-span new, and of the latest cut, from patent leathers to neck-tie; then, with my fancy stick, kids, and lastly the new hat, I set out for a walk on the Battery. No putting on airs, nothing rustic about me! I trotted along like a chap that had been there before and knew the price of tickets, and what a circus was—Barnum's or any other man's. Well, I was beginning to feel like an old New Yorker, and to make up my mind which theatre I would patronize, when I felt

a slight push of my elbow, and, turning round, saw a fellow who looked just as if his landlady had told him his room was wanted for another boarder in case that little matter wasn't settled before night. 'Well, my man,' said I, pertly, 'what's up now?'—'I know,' he replied, 'you'll pardon a poor devil for thinking that you were the kind of man to give a helping hand to one who can't help himself.'—'Ah, indeed!' said I; 'thank you for that distinguishing mark of your keen perception,' bowing. So the fellow bowed too, and went on. 'The fact of the matter is,' said he, 'I was just on the way to put my watch—' 'Up the spout,' said I, interrupting him.—'No,' said he—'to pawn it.'—'Oh!' said I.—'Yes,' he replied. 'Nothing but'—here he began to snuffle—'sheer want, sick wife, stranger in the town, doctor's bill.' Then, suddenly changing his tone, he continued: 'Would you give a twenty and take the watch?'—'My dear fellow,' said I, 'it's no go; you're on the wrong beat; but I'll give you that Mexican dollar,' holding one up, 'if you'll whisper in my ear what particular part of my "get-up" led you to take me for a "pick-up" from the rural districts.' Holding out his hand and pointing to my head, he coolly replied, 'Your hat, sir.'—'Jerusalem cherries!' said I. 'My hat! and it a Bebee A, No. 1, transported from the metropolis to the provinces and back again, before a rustic *air* could give it a brush!'"

CHAPTER XIX.

PECULIARITIES OF SOME GREAT ACTORS.

BUCKSTONE'S MANNERISMS.

I HAVE before referred to the fact that actors are prone to copy such methods as strike their fancy in the manner of some celebrated performer. It may appear strange that a comedian should adopt the peculiarities of a tragedian, and yet such has frequently been the case. In 1836, when I first heard Mr. Buckstone and Mr. Keeley ("Little Bob," as he was familiarly called), I was struck with a peculiarity in their style of speaking and the quality of their voices that seemed to recall vocal effects very suggestive of Mr. Macready and Mr. Charles Kean.

Among the Irish may be observed two remarkable modes of utterance directly opposite to each other. For instance, one will commence a sentence with great rapidity of movement and elevation of voice, gradually concluding with a slow movement and low pitch. The answer to the following passage will serve as an illustration, if read after the manner indicated: "Well, Paddy, you sha'n't go without something to keep life in you; you shall have a little grog and as much provision

as I can spare you for your voyage."—"Och! that same shows there's the good heart in you. Och, musha! the heavens shower blessings on you and all that belong to you! I pray the Virgin Mary and twelve apostles, not forgetting St. Patrick!"

Now, let the following be read by starting at a slow pace, with a low tone and increasing to a run at the highest pitch, and the opposite style will be presented: "Och! may the angels in heaven be kind to the like of you, and a long life to your honor, and a light heart and a power to your elbow, and a heavy purse for evermore! I pray the Blessed Virgin and all the saints. Amen."

Both these styles of utterance were perceptible in Mr. Buckstone's delivery. All those abrupt transitions, chuckles, and alternations from briskness to gravity by which his audience was kept in a gale of merriment were among the strangest vocal effects imaginable, and yet they were adroitly-managed burlesque imitations of Kean, Macready, and Kemble. Mr. Buckstone showed in such artificial methods his powers of analysis and recombination, and his skill as a dramatic artist, but confined himself within the narrow limit of a mimetic style. The following remarks will serve to show how apt the public are to be caught by quaintness of outline or strongly-contrasted coloring. They appeared after the death of Mr. Buckstone, which occurred recently:

"Two good things can be said of Mr. Buckstone that can be said of few low comedians—

there was no bitterness in his nature, and he never wanted to act tragedy. On the other hand, he was like most of his class in being both generous and improvident. Many a poor actor and author was the recipient of his bounty, and his never-failing kindness of speech and manner was the genuine reflex of an amiable and sympathetic nature. Mr. Buckstone, strictly speaking, was an 'eccentric' rather than a 'low' comedian. He had little variety in style, and in truth was the same in almost everything. But this, whether it should have been so or not, was one secret of his popularity. He had an extraordinary quaintness of delivery, compounded of drawl and sudden volubility, beginning his sentences at a slow walk, so to speak, and bringing them up at a hand-gallop that was extremely funny. His hold on the London audience was something remarkable. The house was in a titter at the mere sight of him, and three words of the well-known voice were enough to set the audience in a roar. Perhaps there never was an actor whose power to produce laughter was more spontaneous, so little the product of art. Mr. Buckstone was nothing if not himself, and therefore was better out of the legitimate or Shakespearian drama than in it. In the latter he had to respect the text, and the grotesque liberties he was wont to take with his words and the public—although never in a coarse or ungentlemanlike spirit—found in these walks no place. His deafness of late years, although of course an impediment, sometimes led to ludi-

crous effects. He would make irrelevant replies, through not catching the cue, with an air of irresistible earnestness, and throw the scene into 'admired confusion' in a fashion that would not have been tolerated with another performer, but which with Buckstone was found simply delicious. His literary talent was considerable, and he wrote many clever plays. He had also some turn for poetry, but this was little exercised. A man who was the friend of Walter Scott and his contemporaries, who had lived to know the youngest of the Victorian poets and playwrights, who practised his art with vigor until he was nearly an octogenarian, and who has always been respected in one of the most trying of professions, Buckstone leaves a gap which for those who loved and admired him can never be filled, and a name that deserves not to be forgotten."

Mr. Buckstone's habit of taking his cue from the tragedian's manner of speech to illustrate his comedy presentations recalls the saying that "There is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous." It has been suggested that Mr. Charles Dickens probably took hints from Buckstone's style to assist him in producing "broad grins" in his popular readings, and it is not unlikely that in composing his fine burlesque ballad of "Captain Reece of the Mantelpiece," Mr. Gilbert had in his "mind's ear" the abrupt and unvarying cadences of Buckstone.

LUDWIG TIECK ON FLECK, KEAN, AND KEMBLE.

While preparing the matter for this volume my attention was called to an admirable article in the February number of *The Nineteenth Century* (London) from the able pen of Theodore Martin, quoting the following from Ludwig Tieck, the celebrated German dramatic poet and critic:

"Johann Friedrich Fleck was born in 1757, appeared on the stage in 1777, rose rapidly to the first rank in his profession, and retained it till his death, in 1801. He had the qualities of a fine figure, eyes, and voice, and of an expressive face, without which no actor of the poetic drama can be great. Humor, that other essential of the great actor, he seems also to have possessed in an eminent degree. His distinction among the actors of his time was the thoroughness of everything he did. He was not fine in passages, but left upon his audience the impression of a great whole of characters, true and consistent as life itself.

"Fleck was slender, not tall, but of the finest proportions; he had brown eyes, whose fire was softened by gentleness, finely pencilled brows, a noble forehead and nose, and in youth his head resembled that of Apollo. In the parts of Essex, Tancred, Ethelwolf, he was fascinating, especially so as the Infante Don Pedro in *Inez de Castro*, a part written, like the whole piece, very feebly and vulgarly, but every word of which, as spoken by him, rang like the inspiration of a great poet. His voice had the purity of a bell and was rich in

full, clear tones, high as well as low, beyond what any one could believe who had not heard them; for in passages of tenderness, entreaty, or devotion he had a flute-like softness at command. And, without ever falling into the grating bass, which often strikes so unpleasantly on our ear, his deep tones rang like metal, with a roll like thunder in suppressed rage, and a roar as of a lion in the unchecked tempest of passion. The tragedian for whom Shakespeare wrote must, in my opinion, have possessed many of the qualities of Fleck, for those marvellous transitions, those interjections, those pauses followed by a tempestuous torrent of words, no less than those side-strokes and touches of Nature, spontaneous, naïve, nay sometimes verging on the comic, which he threw into his performance, were given with such natural truth as to make us understand for the first time all the subtlety and peculiarity of the poet's pathos."

Tieck, writing of Edmund Kean in 1814, says:

"He is the stage-hero of the present day. Those who are ready enough to join in the censure of Kemble and the mannerisms of his school start with the assumption that the favorite of their idolatry is far above criticism. Kean is a little, slightly-built man, quick in his movements, and with brown, clever, expressive eyes. Many who remember Garrick maintain that Kean is like him; even Garrick's widow, who is still alive, is said to concur in this opinion; but she will hardly agree with the many admirers of Kean, who hold that

he acts in Garrick's manner, and even surpasses him in many of his parts.

"In Hamlet all the playful, humorous speeches, all the bitter, cutting passages, were given in the best style of comedy. But he could not touch the tragic side of the character. His mode of delivery is the opposite of Kemble's. He speaks quickly, often with a rapidity that injures the effect of what he has to say. His pauses and excess of emphasis are even more capricious and violent than Kemble's; added to which, by dumb show or sudden stops, and such like artifices, he frequently imports into the verse a meaning which, in a general way, is not to be found in it. He stares, starts, wheels round, *drops his voice*, and then *raises it* suddenly *to the highest pitch*, goes off hurriedly, then comes back slowly when one does not expect him; by all these epigrammatic surprises crowding his impersonation with movement, showing an inexhaustible invention, breaking up his part into a thousand little frequent *bons-mots*, tragical or comic, as it may happen; and it is by this clever way of, as it were, entirely recasting the characters allotted to him that he has won the favor of the general public, especially of the women. If he does not weary the attention as Kemble does, one is being constantly circumvented by him, and defrauded, as by a skilful juggler, of the impression, the emotion, which we have a right to expect. Now, on the artist's part all this is done in mere caprice, with the deliberate purpose of giving a great variety of light and shade to his speeches, and of intro-

ducing turns and sudden alternations, of which neither the part nor the author has for the most part afforded the most remote suggestion. This is, therefore, playing with playing, and more violence is done to an author—especially if that author be Shakespeare—by this mode of treatment than by the declamatory manner of the Kembles."

The same writer says of Kemble's style:

"On his first entrance John Kemble reminded me, by his noble presence, his stature, and speaking, expressive face, of our excellent Heinrich Jacobi. The English themselves admit that even when he was young the part of Posthumus was one of his weakest; how much more now! His voice is weak and tremulous, but full of expression, and there is a ring of feeling and intelligence in every word, only much too strongly marked, and between every second and third word there comes a pause, and most of the verses or speeches end in a high key. In consequence of this tedious style of delivery the piece, even though probably one-half of it was cut out, lasted an unusual time. This, so to speak, musical declamation was incompatible with all real acting—nay, in a certain degree made it impossible—for when everything is made to depend on little *nuances* of speaking, and every monologue and every single passage is sought to be rounded off into an artistic whole, any delineation of character, of the ebb and flow of passion and feeling, is out of the question. Here and there one saw the great master; for example, in the second act, when Iachimo, after

his return, tells how he has succeeded; the despair, mingled with rage, the kindling of fresh hope, and the falling back into comfortless anguish, were admirably given, and one could see clearly that if Kemble had not *succumbed to mannerism and a one-sided school* he would have been a truly great actor."

In Hotspur, "John Kemble declaimed leisurely, intelligently, making frequent efforts at the humor of the part, but never grasping it. Here, too, he spoke quite as slowly as in the parts I had previously seen, made two or three considerable pauses, now drawled (*klagte*), now emphasized every second or third word, one could not say why, and then ended so frequently in a sort of sing-song in all that I thought I was again listening to one of those Protestant preachers whom one used to hear twenty years ago in provincial places indulging in this wailing, tedious *tempo*. Percy's first long story to the king Kemble seemed to take as serious earnest, only exaggerated by youthful violence. To this solemn, almost torturing, slowness the ear became so accustomed that when Percy came to the passage—

> In Richard's time—what do you call the place?
> A plague upon 't! it is in Gloucestershire—
> 'Twas where the madcap duke his uncle kept,

and he all at once spoke it with a quick, sharp utterance, like a man who suddenly cannot call a name to mind, and seeks for it with impatience, the whole house broke out into vehement applause

at the sudden drop of the voice and alteration of the tempo. It is something noticeable when a thing of this kind—which is a mere matter of course, and which can be easily hit off by the mediocre actor—is received by the public with such marked admiration. This mannerism, which often shows itself in Kemble, as in other actors, capriciously and without cause, reminds one of the tragic recitations of the French, who in every scene fling out some verses at a galloping pace in succession to passages spoken with measured and exaggerated emphasis."

"In Hamlet what Kemble brought prominently out was the sad, the melancholy, the nobly-suffering aspect of the character. He gave way to tears much too often, spoke many of the scenes—that with the players, for instance—admirably, and moved and bore himself like a man of high blood and breeding. But, as usual, there was almost no distinction between the lighter and heavier parts of the play; and then, again, the distinction between prose and verse was nowhere marked. . . . When Hamlet, speaking of the rugged Pyrrhus, says,

> If it live in your memory, begin at this line: let me see, let me see—
> "The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast"—
> 'Tis not so:—it begins with "Pyrrhus"—

there was a general burst of applause throughout the house, because this forgetfulness, this seeking after the beginning of the verse, was expressed in

such a natural way. And, indeed, when one has been listening for a length of time to a slow, measured, wailing rhythm, regularly interrupted by considerable pauses and by a succession of highly-pitched inflections, one is quite taken by surprise on hearing once more the tones of Nature and the manner of every-day conversation."

Of Coriolanus, Tieck says:

"Nobler or more marked expression could not be given to the proud nature of Coriolanus, and, figure, look, and voice, here stood the artist in excellent stead. His heroic wrath indeed seemed too feeble, and his fury failed altogether, because his organ was too weak for these supreme efforts, and the actor had to economize it for the most important passages. Greatest and most exciting of all was the close; without exaggeration it might be pronounced sublime."

Mr. Martin makes the following judicious commentary on the remarks of the German critic:

"Barren although our stage unhappily is, for the time, of the powers, natural and acquired, which can alone do justice to the Shakespearian drama, Tieck's account of what he saw is not wholly without consolation for us. All was not so perfect in those so-called palmy days of the stage as some would have us believe. Bad acting was not uncommon then, any more than now—as, indeed, how can it ever be otherwise than common, the art being so difficult as it is? And although there were actors of great natural gifts, and who, by a lifetime of study and observation,

had trained themselves to grapple with the great characters of the poetic drama, and to portray the 'high actions and high passions' by which they lifted delighted audiences into that ideal world which, after all, seems to be the only real one, the stage of that period was far behind our own in this—that liberties of excision and addition were taken with the text of Shakespeare which would now be impossible, and that those accessories which give life and variety to the action of the scene were neglected to an extent as culpable in one way as the excess in scenic splendor and elaboration of costume to which we have of late years been accustomed is objectionable in another."

SOME AMUSING TRANSPOSITIONS.

A blunder committed by a supernumerary may give an actor much annoyance, but a mistake made by himself is even more provoking. Mr. Cooper was once performing in the character of Virginius. After stabbing his daughter to save her from the polluting touch of Appius Claudius, Virginius stands over her dead body, holding aloft the bloody knife. Appius commands his lictors to seize him. The frenzied father shrieks out in tones of desperation—

> If they dare
> To tempt the desperate weapon that is maddened
> With drinking my daughter's blood, why let them. Thus
> It rushes in amongst them!
> Way there! way!

Then, dashing at the advancing lictors, he cuts his way through and escapes.

By some unacccountable freak of the tongue, however, when he heard the command of Appius to seize him, instead of exclaiming, "Thus it rushes in amongst them," he yelled out in the most intense rage, "Thus it mushes in arungst them!" and, dashing off the stage, left the audience convulsed with irrepressible laughter.

In the same play, when the female slave, instigated by Appius Claudius, makes oath that she is the mother of Virginia, Virginius brings his daughter forward, and, appealing to the citizens in the Forum, exclaims—

> Is this the daughter of a slave? I know
> 'Tis not with men as shrubs and trees, that by
> The shoot you know the rank and order of
> The stem; yet who from such a stem
> (*pointing with scorn at the woman*)
> Would look for such a shoot?—

laying his hand tenderly on the head of his child.

In delivering these lines the tragedian, Mr. John R. Scott, with great earnestness and feeling once made the following strange transposition of the closing words of the text:

> Who from such a shoot (*pointing to the woman*)
> Would look (*taking his daughter by the hand*)
> For such a stem?

Then followed a dead silence. The actor was quite unconscious of the blunder he had made until a slight demonstration from the audience

gave him an impression that something had gone awry, when the sternness of his features gradually gave way to an unmistakable smile, and the whole house, performers and all, burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

I will venture to add yet another incident of a somewhat similar character. In the tragedy of *Macbeth*, when Malcom's army is seen approaching the castle, one of the officers of the usurping thane rushes into his presence, crying out, "There is ten thousand—" when he is cut short by Macbeth's contemptuous and indignant exclamation of "Geese, villain?" to which the messenger replies, "Soldiers, sir." Now, on the occasion alluded to the man came on in hot haste, and said, "There is ten thousand—" when Macbeth, turning fiercely on him cried out, "Soldiers, villain?" "No," said the messenger, in a tone of bewilderment—"no, no. Geese, sir." And then the two actors stood staring at one another in blank dismay, while peal on peal of laughter burst from the audience, in which the tragedian, unable to preserve his gravity, at last, joined. Order having been restored, an attempt was made to go on with the scene, but the first line to be uttered by Macbeth being in reference to the affrighted appearance of the messenger, followed by an indignant inquiry as to who the soldiers were, it was too much for both actor and audience; the laugh recommenced, and did not cease until the curtain fell.

A comical effect was once produced by Charles

Kemble (as Shylock), by transposing unconsciously several letters in the phrase, "Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?" and making of it, "Shall I lay surgery upon my poll? No, not for Venice!"

As I have said before, many imperfections in the business of the stage are attributable to the ignorance—and, I may add, many more to the heedlessness—of the persons to whom are entrusted what are considered the insignificant parts; but such defects may be in a great measure avoided by affording the servants, messengers, and other subordinates employed on the stage a pay sufficient to enable them to maintain themselves creditably, and to induce them to take enough interest in their business to perform its duties with care. As a general rule, the professional value of the actor is estimated by the importance of the part he plays or by the size of the type in which the public sees his name printed on the bills.

STICKS OF RED SEALING-WAX.

I remember an old-time theatre where many hard-working actors who had become superannuated were retained to play little parts, "going on" as citizens, villagers, constables, and clerks. They owned their own "properties," such as wigs, shoes, tights, long stockings—which, by the by, were always red—and lace collars of a very ample size and positive pattern. I had nearly forgotten

the inevitable black leather belt and huge bright buckles. The wardrobe of the theatre furnished doublets, tunics, and other more important articles of dress. As a youth I had often the arduous duty assigned to me of acting as an interpreter of the pantomimic performances of the well-known actress Madame Celeste. I remember that one night, as I waited at the wing ready to "go on" with her, she called my attention to four old "citizens" who were standing in a row before the footlights. For some very proper reason, I have no doubt, they were all dressed in gray tunics, with long red stockings, black shoes and rosettes, and as they stood in a line they presented as fine a representation of Shakespeare's "shrunk shanks" as could be exhibited to the public gaze. The madame touched my elbow, and in her usually vivacious manner said, "Mistare Murders" (she always would give my name that extraordinary pronunciation)—"Mistare Murders, only look!" pointing to the four pairs of red-stockinged legs: "did you evare see so many sticks of red sealing-wax on the stage before?" It was certainly a very ridiculous spectacle, viewed from the standpoint of Madame Celeste's professional exhibitions, especially as, in her case, what the ladies sometimes term "limbs" were by no means like sticks of sealing-wax, but, in the language of Sam Weller, "on the contrary, quite the reverse."

It was with some compunction that I laughed at the old actors, for there was but little laughter

in them; and besides, they always looked upon themselves as representing the "Old-Drury" style of acting, and spoke of their younger brethren as "innovators and dashing fellows, without the solidity and steadiness of the old style." Though these veterans might be called "sticks" in stage-parlance, they never "stuck" in their utterances, nor could they be accused either of undue haste or excitement. No; they were of the class that always take time, but never by the forelock: not one of *them* would have rushed on the boards exclaiming to a horror-stricken Richard the Third, "My lord, 'tis I, the early village cock!" and then forget to add that the aforesaid "early bird" had "twice done salutation to the morn." No; my old friends in the red stockings would have waited for the word, and then conscientiously articulated every syllable. If they were not great actors, they were good men. In Europe the subordinate parts have always careful and competent representatives, because the public will brook no crude effects. There disapprobation is unequivocal and expressed by hissing, which always touches the manager and appals the actor. But with us it is not unfrequently manifested in derisive laughter.

I remember once playing in a theatre of the most beautiful architecture and costly appointment, the company of which was ill-assorted and ill-disposed, and without a "head and front" of experienced authority. I was engaged for a fortnight's performance of tragedy and comedy at the beginning of the opening season. One night,

in acting Hamlet to an audience which fairly represented the intellectual and cultivated people of the city, I was dismayed to see my Horatio walk on the stage in the most mysterious manner, and, confidentially laying his hand on my arm, he held on to it with such earnestness that I quite forgot Hamlet in the conviction that my friend was unmistakably drunk, and that his affectionate manner was merely intended to secure his perpendicularity, in illustration of the old saying, "United we stand." The audience merely laughed at my drunken Horatio, but they should have hissed him.

CHAPTER XX.

SOME REMINISCENCES OF ACTORS, ACTRESSES, AND MANAGERS.

THE PIONEER MANAGER OF CHICAGO.

"AN honest man's the noblest work of God;" and among all those with whom I have associated in a long professional career, I have never met one who better deserved that title than Mr. John B. Rice, the pioneer manager of Chicago. I knew him well. He enjoyed, as he deserved, the unlimited esteem of all with whom he had business transactions or exchanged the courtesies of social life.

It was his constant habit to think and do what was right. "His heart was open as the day." He did his duty fearlessly and without regard to consequences. As a husband and father he was faithful and true, and as a friend disinterested and generous. Like Abou Ben Adhem, "he loved his fellow-men." Like Brutus,

> His life was gentle, and the elements
> So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
> And say to all the world, "*This was a man!*"

By those who were not intimately acquainted with him he was not unfrequently esteemed a man

of prosaic character, and yet "castle-building" was his favorite amusement. He loved a walk in the country or a stroll along the shore of the great lake, or to throw himself down beneath some tree and lie for hours watching the passing clouds, or in like manner at night commune with the stars, "looking through Nature up to Nature's God." A tendency in youth to such "mental idling" carried him to the stage, and made him at first successful as a singer; but he was practical as well, and therefore became an actor of many parts and a manager of many theatres. In early life he married Miss Mary Ann Warren, an actress, the daughter of Mr. William Warren, the old favorite actor and highly-esteemed citizen of Philadelphia, to whose honesty and ability in the management of the original Chestnut Street Theatre the dramatic profession owes its honorable record in what has been termed "the palmy days of Old Drury." Their children, one son and five daughters, were reared in the very atmosphere of the theatre, but none of them "took up the calling" of their parents. Mrs. Rice was not fond of the profession, and yet amid her maternal duties and household cares she pursued it assiduously until the business of her husband became so secure as to render such labor no longer necessary, when she retired to private life, which she still lives to adorn.

The daughters are all married, and worthily represent the virtues of their parents. The only son, William Rice, having finished his education,

became a machinist, and had but just reached manhood when, at the outbreak of the war of the Rebellion, he enlisted in a company of volunteers formed by his fellow-craftsmen in Chicago, was elected their captain, and at the head of his company fell, in defence of the Union, on the battlefield of Chickamauga. The high estimation in which Mr. Rice was held as a man of probity led to his election to the mayoralty of Chicago, and to his re-election for a second and third term; and his faithful discharge of the duties of that office was acknowledged by his election to Congress. While in Washington, however, his health failed, and he finally died at his post—"a good and faithful servant."

WARREN, WOOD, AND JEFFERSON.

Mr. William Warren, the father of Mrs. Rice, for many years delighted the people of Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington in his impersonations of Falstaff, Sir Peter Teazle, and many kindred characters. Warren, Wood, and Jefferson (the grandfather of our Jefferson) were actors who through good and evil report upheld the dignity of the profession. They were the social equals of the playgoers who at the advent of the theatre in America represented its learned professions and best society—to whom the drama, as then conducted, was a means for the cultivation of taste and a source of rational and refined enjoyment. In those days the stage presented

the best features of histrionic delineation and the purest forms of the dramatic art.

MRS. CLARA FISHER MAEDER.

Mrs. Clara Fisher Maeder, to whom I have referred in connection with the musical education of Miss Charlotte Cushman, was in those early days, and still is, one of the brightest ornaments of the profession. Her children were carefully brought up and in strict accordance with religious principles. Her eldest daughter became the wife of an eminent physician of Edinburgh, and is still widely known in that city for her intelligence, refinement, and social accomplishments. The other members of the family occupy honorable positions in the profession of their mother, and share with her general and unqualified respect.

MR. THOMAS BARRY.

The late Mr. Thomas Barry, to whom I have alluded as a manager of the Tremont Theatre, Boston, was a true gentleman of the old school, a man of unexceptionable character, and a valuable citizen. He was twice married, his first wife being an actress of good reputation and a most excellent woman. His second consort was a young Englishwoman, also an actress and noted for her personal charms, fine talents, and many noble traits. Their family consisted of a son and three daughters, and no woman can boast a brighter

record as a wife and mother. Through her husband's checkered career, in prosperity and adversity, she was a loving companion and faithful helpmeet. Their home in Boston was a model of comfort and refinement, and their children, worthy of their parentage, reflected honor upon the calling of the actor and enjoyed the highest esteem of the community in which they still live. Mr. Barry died, universally respected, at a good old age, having more than fulfilled the alloted term of threescore years and ten.

MRS. ALEXINA FISHER BAKER.

Among our native actresses no one has a brighter record than Mrs. Alexina Fisher Baker, the widow of Mr. John Lewis Baker, a most excellent actor and highly-respected citizen of Philadelphia. Reared from her earliest childhood upon the stage, educated, it may be said, at the feet of Thespis, possessing every ennobling womanly virtue, by nature ardent and impulsive, and yet sensitive and retiring, as an actress she embodied the poetic ideal of the characters she personated. Whatever criticism may have said of her performances, it must be admitted that she has ever been an earnest and faithful expositor of the sentiment of the author she has illustrated, and has never failed to receive a sympathetic response from her auditors. She enjoys, as she merits, the unqualified admiration of the various communities in which she has lived and

acted, reflecting honor upon the profession to which she has so long devoted the labors of an exemplary life.

I have been induced to recall these private histories—not because they are unusual in the dramatic profession, but as affording evidence that it is entirely consonant with a faithful discharge of all the duties of life. Among the actors and actresses with whom I have studied and performed I have met with society affording all the intellectual and social enjoyments which can be found in any class of cultivated people. The women of the profession compare favorably in every respect with the best of their sex in other vocations, and in common with their more highly-esteemed sisters have exhibited the most brilliant virtues, which have often beamed through shadows of detraction and neglect. My memory retains the history of many who from youth to age have toiled that brothers and sisters might receive the benefits of education and that fathers and mothers might enjoy the blessings of comfortable homes. Trite but true are the words of Pope—

> Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow;
> The rest is all but leather or prunello;

and, again:

> Honor and shame from no condition rise;
> Act well your part, there all the honor lies.

A MISTAKE APPLAUDED.

On the occasion of a performance of the *Honeymoon* at the Tremont Theatre, Boston, Miss Ellen Tree was playing Julianna, and I enacting the part of Rolando, the assumed woman-hater, when an effect was produced which for a moment threatened my discomfiture; but, fortunately for my reputation as a correct actor, it resulted in an unexpected triumph. My stumbling-block will be found in the following speech. Rolando asserts the impossibility of taming a woman "with the nine parts of speech;" Montalban replies that the Duke Aranza had the power to subdue the imperious beauty Julianna, saying,

> He has the trick to draw the serpent's fang,
> And yet not spoil her beauty;

and Rolando adds—

> Could he discourse with fluent eloquence
> More languages than Babel sent abroad,
> The simple rhet'ric of her mother-tongue
> Would *pose him presently;* for woman's voice
> Sounds like a fiddle in a concert—always
> The shrillest, if not the loudest, instrument.

I had given the previous lines of Rolando with all the spirit that they required and I could command, and began the first line of the reply to Montalban with a gayly-intoned, brisk movement; but at the end of the first line, instead of saying "fluent eloquence," I said with fearful distinctness, "eloquent fluence," and in my attempts to correct myself got

my tongue and lips, as it were, mixed up in a muddle of cross-purposes; at which, as might have been expected, the audience, after trying to smother the inclination, gave way to uncontrollable laughter. Feeling mortified at my mistake, I set my teeth firmly, and, taking a long breath through my nostrils, made a fresh start, deliberately articulating every element in each syllable, and, as I repeated the line, "*fluent eloquence*" came out with the clear ring of the pure metal; at which the audience, who had stopped laughing and were as silent "as mice in a cheese," greeted my success with hearty cheers and round after round of applause.

AN EPISODE OF ISTHMUS TRAVEL.

My brother, Samuel K. Murdoch, now and for many years past a professor of elocution, is, like myself, a native of Philadelphia, and in the memorable riots of 1844 commanded an artillery company and gained much distinction in efficient service against the violators of the public peace in the streets of Southwark. At that period and thereafter he took a deep interest in the study of medicine, and attended medical lectures with a view to admission and practice as a physician. But in 1849 he was induced to accompany our youngest brother, Edward Murdoch, on a "fortune-seeking" expedition to California, where he spent some time in "prospecting" for gold among the mountains, and finally purchased a tract of land in the San José Valley, and commenced its cultivation. While

engaged in these agricultural pursuits he also found occasional opportunities to aid the sick and suffering in the neighborhood of his new home, for which a natural gift, cultivated by his previous studies, peculiarly qualified him.

At this time, however, at the suggestion of some old friends from Philadelphia, he appeared on the stage at San Francisco as Pierre in *Venice Preserved*, and then played Hotspur in *Henry the Fourth* and several other first-class parts, closing a week's engagement with a benefit. His success was such as to warrant his making arrangements for a permanent pursuit of the profession, for which, by his studious habits, his voice, and personal appearance, he was well qualified.

In 1853, I visited California, and, as my health was not good, he consented to accompany me as a medical adviser in my journeys through that region, in the course of which at times he successfully performed important characters in the plays in which I appeared. But continuous exposure in a climate to which I was unaccustomed, and constant professional labor, at the close of a year's engagements rendered my immediate return to "the States" an imperative necessity; and, that I might receive proper attention on the way, he determined to accompany me home. We accordingly took passage in a steamer, the owners of which, as we afterward learned and found occasion to regret, had made a heavy wager with the proprietors of a rival vessel as to which would make the shortest time from the Pacific to the city of

New York. In the midst of our voyage the captain discovered that by the contrivance of interested parties in San Francisco he had received an insufficient supply of coal, in consequence of which, when we were within three days of Panama, it was exhausted. After using every effort, by landing at all available points among the islands and cutting down trees for fuel, the captain was finally obliged to depend entirely upon his sails to finish the voyage to Panama. On arriving there it was found that the railroad-train we expected to convey us across the Isthmus had been appropriated by the passengers of the other steamer, which had come in twenty-four hours before us, thus winning the race on the Pacific side. We had therefore to await the arrival of another train, which resulted in a detention of twenty-four hours more, bringing the time of our departure to the close of the following day. Having made but little progress, we arrived in the darkness at a bridge which the conductor declared to be unsafe, and we were forthwith "switched off" to a side-track, where we passed the night in the cars, breathing a miasmatic atmosphere pestilent to all but the native reptiles and buzzards. At about daybreak on the following morning our journey was resumed, but not until after we had found that another train on its way to the same place had passed safely over the bridge during the night, the passengers from which, we realized with much indignation, would by right of precedence secure all the available accommodation on

board of the ship about to sail for New York before we should be able to arrive, which would compel us to endure a still further trial of patience by additional detention in the ill-provided and overcrowded public-houses of Aspinwall.

We proceeded slowly, and stopped at various points along the road, where, without any apparent cause, long delays occurred, until an opinion began to prevail that these detentions were all preconcerted; and at one of the stopping-places an individual suspected of being an emissary of the rival steamship company, and who had made himself particularly obnoxious, was seized by the passengers, who were on the point of ducking him in the muddy water of the swamps when the shrill whistle of the engine caused the crowd to drop the object of their resentment and rush for the cars, their timely departure being evidently made in the interest of the suspected party.

Considering the general character of the passengers and the nature of their grievances, it was not unnatural that they should feel resentful, the majority of them being men unaccustomed to submit to the slightest imposition or even quietly to endure the expression of an adverse opinion. So the spirit of mutiny at last became overwhelming, and finally, on the stopping of the train in the suburbs of Aspinwall, the more excitable of the party began to lose all self-control, and threats of vengeance previously uttered by a few were then heard on every hand, indicating a general outbreak of violence. Several persons while at the stations

had procured tallow candles, which they lighted, and, holding the flames against the painted canvas, burnt fantastic figures on the ceilings of the cars amid laughter and applause, while the other interior work was subjected to damage in various ways.

In the midst of this scene of disorder several persons were engaged in a violent quarrel of their own, which soon reached a climax. Finding all efforts to preserve order unavailing, my brother and I were about to leave the car when we saw a man immediately in front of us reaching for the pistol-pocket in his pantaloons, and the next moment, as he attempted to seize his opponent by the throat, my brother caught hold of his collar, and, whirling him quickly round, threw him on his back, wrenching from his grasp the revolver, which he had already drawn, and crying out, "The man who fires into such a crowd as this is an assassin and a fool."

The suddenness of this act and the determined tone of his voice brought the more reasonable of the crowd to their senses, but before there was time for the excitement to cool a furious fellow, brandishing a formidable knife, cried out, "I'm not for firing into a crowd, but I go *clear in* for satisfaction on this company, which has cheated us. Let us cut the d——d cars to pieces; and here goes for the first lick."

At the same time he raised his knife with a sweeping motion toward the side of the car, the body of which was partly composed of cane- or

bamboo-work. Before he could make the intended slash, however, amid cries of "That's the talk!" "That's the ticket!" "Out with your knives, men! that's the thing to do!" I succeeded in arresting his arm, and exclaimed, "No, no; that's *not* the thing to do."

"Who are you?" said the man with the knife as he shook off my hold—"who are you?"

"Your friend," I replied, "and the friend of the men you are about to injure."

"This infernal railroad company is no friend of ours," was his retort.

"That may be," said I, "but you forget the passengers who are waiting at Aspinwall for these very cars, the only ones they are likely to get to take them to the steamer at Panama, by which they are to reach California, where they expect to find some of the same sort of yellow stuff you are carrying home in your pockets. Just put yourselves in the place of those poor fellows, and where's the man who will strike the first blow?"

For a moment there was a dead silence, and then the leader cried out, "*I* won't, for one, old fellow. You're right—you're right *all the time!* That's the miner's stamp: Be just and defy the devil! Your head's level! Bully for you!"

At which the crowd set up an approving shout of "Hurrah for Californy and the old home States!"

The threatened train was thus left uninjured, while the still excited crowd gave vent to their

feelings in yells which plainly showed that without an appeal to their sympathy and common sense they could have been fully equal to the destruction they had deemed an act of justice.

A THRICE-TOLD TALE, WITH AN APPENDIX.

There is an old story about an actor who made a laughable mistake in delivering the lines addressed to Richard the Third when he obstructs the funeral procession of King Henry the Sixth:

RICHARD.

Villains, set down the corse, or, by Saint Paul,
I'll make a corse of him that disobeys.

OFFICER.

My lord, stand back, and let the coffin pass.

The actor, it is said, instead of giving the words as they stood in the quotation, cried out in the usual tone of command,

My lord, stand back, and let the parson cough.

This story being told one night in the green-room, it was remarked by an actor present that any one who could commit such a blunder must be a donkey. Another replied that it was possible for a nervous man to make such a mistake and yet not prove himself an ass. This led to a discussion, and finally a bet was made that the objector under similar circumstances would do the same thing. The question was to be decided upon the next performance of the "crooked-backed tyrant."

The night came, and found our actor-officer full of confidence in his ability correctly to deliver the text. Some time before going on, however, he was observed walking up and down behind the scenes muttering to himself "and let the coffin pass," while now and then, from the actors ambushed in the dusky corners, out of earshot of the audience, came "let the parson cough," his fellow-performers, in their love of fun, being determined to keep alive in his memory a recollection of the fatal transposition. The cue was given for his entrance, and the officer took his place on the scene, when, perceiving the actors standing in the wings, watching his movements in expectation of his failure, he began to be nervous, and as Richard, advancing, cried out, "I'll make a corse of him that disobeys," down came the officer's levelled pike before the tyrant's breast as he exclaimed, "My lord, stand back," and then, in spite of every precaution, he blurted out the terrible words, "and let the parson cough!" The astonished Richard, hesitating in his reply, afforded to the audience and the actors full opportunity to realize and enjoy the joke, which of course was anything but a joke to him, who not only lost his bet, but by his own judgment was "written down an ass," and pack-saddled with the laughter of the whole theatre.

MR. JOHN G. GILBERT.

The professional career of Mr. John G. Gilbert presents a remarkable instance of dramatic talent.

This gentleman first appeared in Boston as an amateur in tragedy, and continued for some time to sustain prominent parts in that line with much success; but it was not until the close of an extensive round of playing in a great variety of characters, under the able management of Mr. James H. Caldwell in the South and West, that he became distinguished for a wonderful power in the delineation of the characters of old men, for which he has now been celebrated for nearly a half century. Mr. Gilbert has always been noted for an exact delivery of the text, for a just and natural expression of thought and feeling, and for a correct observance of propriety in all the details of costume. Exact conformity to such indispensable requirements for the impersonation of character marks the true artist and shows the actor's regard for his profession. Mr. Gilbert not only stands deservedly conspicuous for dramatic talent, but is no less so for unblemished character and the possession of every gentlemanly quality.

A striking evidence of Mr. Gilbert's power as an actor was exhibited during the engagement of Miss Ellen Tree in Boston in 1836. In *The Maid of Milan* Miss Tree performed the character of Clari and Mr. Gilbert that of Romano, and in the impassioned interview between the unhappy parent and the misguided daughter the part of the father was played with such apparent intensity of natural feeling as to absorb performers and auditors alike, investing the scene with all the living realities of suffering, sorrow, and distracting passion. I have

never seen an audience more completely under the sway of dramatic power than on that occasion. For a time, with sobs and tears and other evidences of intense emotion, they seemed to have become actual mourners over some common affliction. In all this remarkable exhibition the skill of the artist was the more manifest on account of the rustic simplicity of the scene and the absence of all mere stage-accessories.

WILLIAM WARREN, JR.

During my first season at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, in 1833, one evening, while waiting for "my call" in the greenroom, I observed a youth slight in figure and looking much like a student of divinity at home for a vacation. He was silent and thoughtful in expression and very formal in manner. He was very soon presented to me as William Warren, Jr., who had just made his first appearance at the Arch Street Theatre in the character of Young Norval. After some years I met him again in that professional school for youthful Thespians, the West. In the hard work of a hard occupation, mental and physical, studying a multitude of dry words day by day, and striving at night to clothe them in the fitting vesture of expressive tone, did William Warren, Jr., acquire the profession of his father and mother. I remember saying to him when he told me of his intention to try Boston, "Don't do it; you will lose your ambition by tying yourself

down to the slow routine of Eastern professional life. The West has a larger field and more vitality." But I was not a prophet. He went to Boston in 1846 and joined the "Museum Company," and, by natural ability, careful cultivation, and devotion to professional duty he educated his audiences to an appreciation of true dramatic art. He also inspired his fellow-actors with his own professional spirit, and thus contributed very largely to the successful establishment of an institution which, with the exception of Wallack's Theatre in New York, may be pronounced the only permanent "home of the drama" in our country. Admired for his talents and beloved for his personal qualities, William Warren is indeed the "observed of all observers" in Boston and its multitudinous environs.

ABJURATION OF STAGE-TRADITIONS.

I have heretofore referred to the advantages which may result from a judicious observance of such features of the technical business of the stage as have been approved and practised by old and distinguished actors. I wish what I have said upon this subject, however, to be received as merely suggestive, and as referred to the judgment of the intelligent dramatic student. There is still abundant room for professional improvement, and much may yet be done for the elevation of the stage even by what may be considered irreverent innovation. The degree of regard

which is paid, not unfrequently, by great performers to traditionary stage-routine, merely because it is traditionary, has been well illustrated by Mrs. Siddons in an account of her first appearance as Lady Macbeth.

Mrs. Siddons states that she had undertaken to perform the character with great diffidence, particularly in view of the reputation which had been acquired by Mrs. Pritchard in the same part. The night had arrived, and, having just completed her toilette, she was deeply absorbed in *mental* preparation when Mr. Sheridan knocked at the door, and, disregarding all her entreaties that she should not be disturbed, insisted upon being admitted, declaring that he must speak to her in relation to a matter of the utmost importance and which seriously concerned her own interest. Feeling compelled at least to admit him, that she might be able to dismiss him the more promptly and regain her composure before the commencement of the play, she was astonished to find that he wished her at that late moment to change the mode in which she had determined to act the "sleeping-scene." He said that he had learned, with the greatest surprise and concern, that she did not intend to retain the candle in her hand; and when she urged the impossibility, should she do so, of washing out the "damned spot," he insisted that if she did put the candle out of her hand it would be considered a presumptuous innovation, inasmuch as Mrs. Pritchard had always retained it. It was too late, however, to reconsider her plan,

although respect for the judgment of Mr. Sheridan would have induced her, in opposition to her own views, to accept his had they been presented in time, and she accordingly acted the scene as she had intended.

The "innovation" was received with approval, and Mr. Sheridan came to her after the play and congratulated her upon her "obstinacy."

Before making my appearance upon the stage I had studied the character of Hamlet; that is, I had committed the words to memory and learned to recite them after the manner prescribed by my elocutionary teacher, Mr. L. G. White, who had pronounced me in every respect qualified to personate the "melancholy Dane." Influenced by this assurance, and in a spirit of reckless adventure, I made the necessary arrangements, and attempted the rehearsal, progressing satisfactorily in soliloquy and dialogue until I reached the "play-scene," when I suddenly discovered that I was "beyond my depth." My teacher was disappointed, but the manager regarded my failure with evident satisfaction, and advised me to try the character of Frederick in *Lovers' Vows*, a part better adapted to my youth and inexperience; and I did so with success. After ten years' service in the ranks of the profession, with gradual promotion, and three years' careful study of Hamlet, I once more attempted its rehearsal, and then the "flighty purpose" was followed by the "deed," and I found myself elected by the popular voice to a place in the court of Denmark.

My first appearance in the character of Hamlet was in the Park Theatre, New York, in 1845, where my friend, Mr. Thomas Barry, was the stage-manager. Mr. Barry was of the Kemble school, and in his own acting much given to a stately style of speech and bearing. Hamlet, in his mind, was not only to be dressed in black, but "steeped to the very lips" in gloom, sombre in mood and grave and deliberate in utterance and gait. The even tenor of his princely demeanor was never to be disturbed by the slightest manifestation of levity, or even thoughtlessness, no matter how much the language of the part might suggest such departure. I remember his astonishment when I told him that I did not intend to wear a black plume, and that it reminded me of the decoration of a hearse. "Why, my dear sir," said he, "had you ever seen John Philip Kemble in that character, as he stood in the glare of the court attired in his suit of sables, grand and gloomy, with his noble features shaded by the dark waving plumes of his hat, you would never consent to trust yourself to the bald effect of an uncovered head." I did not wear a plume, however, nor did I fail, in the face of traditionary usage, to follow the teachings of Shakespeare by an occasional departure from the shadow of "the tragic pall" in the premeditated levity of manner appropriate to Hamlet's eccentric moods, in which he assumes what is foreign to his nature, the mask of "an antic disposition."

EPILOGUE.

I feel unwilling to close this work without an acknowledgment of indebtedness to my old and esteemed friend, Mr. FERDINAND J. DREER of Philadelphia, at whose suggestion I have taken these pages from a series of my lectures entitled *Reminiscences of the Stage*, and arranged them for publication in this form; and I trust that no disappointment may result from an omission to notice many theatrical performers distinguished for personal and professional ability, an association with whom has been prevented by circumstances which have placed me without the dramatic circle for many years.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

I.

THE following able article on the uses and abuses of the Drama and the Theatre appeared originally as a communication in the *Southern Literary Messenger* for March, 1841, and was handed me at the time by a friend while I was playing an engagement at Richmond, Va. I introduce it in this volume with feelings of peculiar gratification, under the impression that it speaks the language of many lovers of the drama in all parts of our country:

THE DRAMA.

NOTWITHSTANDING the manifold corruptions and abuses by which theatrical exhibitions are now unhappily disgraced, I cannot help retaining, I must own, my early predilection for such entertainments. When I reflect on the great poetical genius and deep knowledge of human nature evinced in the composition of our best plays, the sportive wit and biting satire with which they expose the weaknesses and vices of men, I cannot but think that, under proper regulation, they might be made subsidiary to the great objects of moral and literary instruction. That there are irregularities (to use the mildest term) in the management of the theatre which demand reform, even its warmest advocates must acknowledge; nor should it create surprise that pious men, disgusted with these irregularities, should denounce such amusements as pernicious and contaminating. I am aware that those who con-

demn the stage in all its aspects and influences constitute a respectable and powerful body, and that they conscientiously believe it repugnant to religion and injurious to the best interests of mankind. Far be it from me to question their sincerity or insult their honest convictions. Such a course might embitter prejudices and confirm opposition, but could never make a single proselyte. Satire and ridicule are poisoned weapons which ofttimes "return to plague the inventor;" and those who employ such means in the vindication of the theatre contrive only to render it more odious, and embolden others, more inimical to religion and religious men than zealous for the true interests of the drama, to use the stage as a vehicle for the most indecent aspersions on the motives and principles of its opponents. Respect is due to the opinions of the religious community even when unsupported by reason; nor can it be endured that buffoons should, with an impious levity, make sport of things which inspire every well-regulated mind with respect and reverence. When the stage, as at present conducted, is so obviously vulnerable to the censure of the moralist, it behooves its friends to abstain from all offensive warfare on those who undertake to criticise its abuses—to strive rather to disarm and conciliate their antagonists by the suppression of those practices with which the drama is so frequently polluted, and to introduce a purer and more exalted standard of taste and morals into its exhibitions. To relume its faded glories, to restore its salutary influences, to convert it from a pander to the vilest and most grovelling passions of our nature into the handmaid of virtue and arbiter of taste, is a consummation only to be accomplished by the co-operation of the wise and good. It is indeed a question entitled to grave consideration whether the friends of virtue do not owe it to the sacred cause they have espoused to promote a change so essential to the moral improvement of society—whether, by withdrawing their countenance from the theatre, they do not allow it to be perverted into an engine of mischief, a potent instrument for the dissemination of vice.

When we review the history of the English theatre, the

most prominent feature that strikes our attention is its rapid degeneracy after the restoration of Charles the Second to a throne which he disgraced not more by his tyranny than by his shameless debaucheries. The early and glorious dawn of the English drama was then obscured and overcast by the murky vapors exhaled from a court reeking with every species of profligacy; and the immortal productions of Shakespeare, Jonson, Massinger, Ford, Beaumont, and Fletcher were supplanted in public favor by the loathsome though brilliant obscenities of Dryden, Farquhar, and Congreve. Public opinion would now brand with infamy any man, however great his genius and acquirements, who should venture to utter in mixed society language offensive to decorum or should stain his pages with indecent epithets and allusions.

Why is it that public opinion, the great arbiter of taste and morals, has not effected the same salutary change in the theatre which it has wrought in conversation and literature? It cannot be doubted that the frequent repetition of indelicate allusions in promiscuous crowds of men and women, by familiarizing the young and ardent of both sexes to immodest thoughts and images of vicious pleasure, tends to awaken the passions and to efface those impressions of disgust and abhorrence which such ideas usually produce in the unsophisticated bosom. The effect of such practices, therefore, unless discouraged by timely rebuke, will be to banish modest women from the theatre; and to what a state of grossness and depravity must our drama be reduced when the salutary restraint imposed by the presence of respectable females is withdrawn? The influence of that amiable sex in refining and polishing the manners of men is felt and admitted in the intercourse of private society. If we observe the conduct of men in those assemblages for amusement from which modest women are excluded, we may form some conception of the disorder, violence, and obscenity which would disgrace our theatres when no longer honored by the presence of the softer sex. Let respectable females renounce all share in dramatic entertainments, let good men stigmatize them as the prolific source of vicious dissipation, and the stage will, in truth, be trans-

formed into a pandemonium more hideous than the heated fancy of its bitterest adversaries has ever depicted.

It is an obvious proposition that plays and their performance must be adapted to the taste of those for whose amusement they are designed; and if theatrical audiences are composed wholly or in a great measure of men of vulgar ideas and dissolute habits, it is certain that such spectacles will assume a corresponding hue and character. Were the majority of those who throng the avenues of the playhouse pious and virtuous persons, resolved to visit every breach of decorum, every immoral act and sentiment, with marks of decided reprobation, the actors from motives of interest would consult the feelings of those whose patronage and support would be so essential to their professional fame and emoluments. Prior to the English Commonwealth dramatic amusements were not discountenanced by religious men. Even the stern genius of Milton did not disdain to impart a dramatic form to the offspring of his muse, and the *Masque of Comus*, one of his most enchanting poems, was actually submitted to private representation. But when, in the political ferment which terminated in the overthrow of the monarchy, the stern, self-denying sectaries of that age—many of them illiterate and unpolished men—obtained the ascendency, all harmless amusements and elegant recreations were indiscriminately proscribed. To men who regarded polite literature not only as an idle and unprofitable pursuit, but as incompatible with the spirit of devotion, it was not surprising that the theatre should be obnoxious. Equally averse to the mirth that cheers and the elegancies that adorn life, these gloomy enthusiasts, with a tyranny resembling that of Procrustes, exacted from all orders of men a rigid conformity to their own ascetic habits. This renunciation of the most innocent enjoyments as dangerous and sinful, this self-infliction of pain and suffering, scarcely less severe than the penances of those anchorites who were driven by a misdirected zeal to caves and deserts in the early ages of Christianity, was too repugnant to human nature to be durable, and produced, in the natural order of events, a correspondent reaction. The excesses of

sincere but mistaken devotion were then succeeded by a period of unbounded license and shameless relaxation of morals; and the subsequent corruption of the drama was the necessary result. Had the pious and uncorrupted part of the nation, instead of resigning the control of the stage to a party as devoid of religion as of common decency, continued to partake of its amusements, their presence might have rescued the dramatic Muse from such degrading prostitution, and checked, in some degree, the spread of that selfish profligacy which infused its poison into the pleasures as well as the business of life. Even the worst men pay an involuntary homage to moral worth, and in spite of all their blustering are overawed by the frown of offended virtue.

To mingle with the motley audience of a theatre, it may be said, would sully the purity of the Christian character; but that argument, if pursued to its consequences, would banish the religious man from all promiscuous assemblages not convened for purposes of devotion. Is he not as likely to encounter in those public meetings not yet forbidden by the most austere to which he resorts, without scruple, at the call of interest or inclination, scenes and characters uncongenial with his feelings, as in the purlieus of a playhouse? Are not court-greens, muster-grounds, and elections places where vicious men are always found, where practices are often indulged in which excite the abhorrence of a good man? And yet who is deterred from attending such assemblages in compliance with the demands of either business or pleasure? What form of depravity, I would ask, infests the theatre which does not rear its brazen front in the streets of a populous city? Do not the dissolute and profane intrude into the haunts of traffic as well as of amusement? Are we not jostled by the votaries of dissipation in the crowded street, and disturbed in the public hotels by their bacchanalian revelries? Must pious men, therefore, shun all places of public resort, and fly to solitude as their only refuge against contamination? We are told by the highest authority that they "are the salt of the world," and consequently they should mingle freely with the world to purify and reform it. The

frivolous gayeties or the grosser excesses of fashionable life would never seduce from the path of rectitude those whose hearts are fortified by religious principle, whose affections are fixed on higher objects; and such men could pass through these allurements with as much security as the people of Israel through the Red Sea.

But it has been alleged that theatrical exhibitions are, in their nature, unfriendly to feelings of devotion, and engender that levity and dissipation of mind which it is the chief design of religion to correct. May not the same thing be affirmed of any other amusement? Have not all pleasurable indulgences, if not judiciously restrained, the same baneful effect on the mind? Even that rational cheerfulness which the most morose will not condemn constantly threatens to betray us into the very evils so studiously eschewed by the opponents of the theatre. Men cannot always be serious. "The feast of reason" uncheered by "the flow of soul" will pall upon the strongest palate. Such is the constitution of human nature that some recreation is indispensable to diversify our graver occupations, to soften the toils and smooth the asperities of life. Surely no one will maintain that all amusement must be relinquished—that the harmless mirth and pleasantry which embellish social intercourse must be renounced, because the abuse of such things may disqualify the mind for serious reflection. And yet if the supposed tendency of theatrical diversions to indispose us for devout meditation is a sufficient reason for abstaining from them altogether, we should be bound, acting on the clearest analogies, to abjure in like manner amusement of every description.

I am not the apologist of the corruptions of the stage; but were those corruptions reformed, I am unable to perceive any inherent tendencies in the drama unfavorable to the cultivation of religious sentiments. If it be not pernicious to read a good play in one's closet, what harm can result from witnessing its representation on the stage? If the affecting scenes and noble sentiments which adorn our best plays tend, even on a calm perusal, to purify and exalt the moral sense, would

not these good impressions be deepened when the witchery of the actor gives them voice and emphasis? Should it be said that the pleasure derived from such spectacles is prone to be carried to excess, I ask, What is there productive of agreeable emotion, either in body or mind, that has not the same tendency? Are not the pleasures of taste, the amusements of elegant literature (pleasures and amusements purely intellectual), also liable to inordinate indulgence? Are not the toils of the student, the researches of philosophy, frequently prosecuted at the expense of health, and to the neglect of that moral culture which, in the view of the religious world, should be paramount to all other pursuits? And must we abstain from all the enjoyments of sense and intellect with which a beneficent Providence has supplied us because human nature, from its constitution, is addicted to the intemperate use of all things that minister to its gratification? Such reasoning would consign mankind to a life of privation and self-denial more intolerable than the most rigid austerities of Catholic superstition. A stoic or an anchorite, by striving to extinguish the passions, to stifle those inborn propensities, those eager yearnings after pleasure, implanted in the human bosom for wise purposes, counteracts the beneficence of his Creator; but a Christian philosopher teaches a doctrine far more practicable and more consonant with our relations to the Supreme Being. He tells us that we are placed here to enjoy, as well as to suffer; that guilt and misery are the fruits, not of the regulated indulgence, but of the excess of our passions; and that by the moderate use of our multiplied blessings we best show our gratitude to the great Giver and the ascendency of virtuous principle over brutal appetite. Religion exacts no sacrifice of those pleasures which become sinful only from their abuse, but has wisely hedged in our path with duties that warn us when their gratification ceases to be blameless.

But, in truth, is not this objection to the theatre as applicable to the business as to the enjoyments of life? Are not the allurements which incite us to the pursuit of gain, of power, and of distinction apt to terminate in excess? Do not the passions, awakened by objects so eagerly coveted by all classes

of men, too often acquire an undue predominance over our hearts? Are they to be condemned, therefore, as unlawful, and shunned as fraught with the destruction of our eternal hopes? If so, what remains within the sphere of human action to which a pious man may safely direct his attention? In this enlightened age no one, I am sure, however strict in his notions of religious duty, would be disposed to push his principles of self-restraint to such a preposterous extreme. All agree that the rewards of industry and talent are legitimate subjects of competition, and the devotee becomes a candidate for these tempting acquisitions without incurring reproach or imagining that the engrossing nature of the pursuit might shake the stability of his religious principles. But is there not danger that, when the ordinary channels of enjoyment are closed, the affections, confined within a narrower compass, will be forced with preternatural violence through those that are left open—that avarice and ambition will usurp the dominion of those hearts which are denied the solace of gratifications less sordid and unsocial? Among the thousand examples of a deep insight into human motives evinced by the writings of Shakespeare, there are few more striking than the scene where he makes Cæsar point to the sour, austere gravity of Cassius as an evidence of the dangerous, designing character of the future conspirator; for it is in such natures that the gloomy, selfish passions of avarice and ambition most readily take root.

The idea that religion demands a total estrangement of its votaries from the world and its amusements wholly precludes those benignant influences which the pious man would otherwise exert on public manners and opinions. It cannot be doubted that religion has contributed largely to implant higher notions of duty and a purer standard of moral sentiment throughout the civilized world, even among those who refuse to acknowledge its divine obligation. To the same cause may be principally ascribed the correction of the grossness and indecency with which conversation and literature were formerly sullied. If religious men had refused to mingle in the social circle with those who did not subscribe to

their articles of faith, or if they had taken no interest in the progress of letters, would a reformation so beneficial in its consequences have ever been effected? If the same interdict were proclaimed against association with unbelievers and against elegant literature which has been so sternly enforced against the theatre, how speedily would we relapse into barbarism, and how soon would the evil passions of men, unchecked by the dread of public censure, wear off that gloss of refinement which, if it be not virtue, banishes at least the provocatives to vice! The reasoning which assumes that a participation in what are called innocent amusements would impair or destroy the feeling of devotion applies, though perhaps in a less degree, to a familiar commerce with the unconverted part of mankind. The worldliness and frivolity, not to say impiety, which frequently disfigure the conversation of such persons are ofttimes as incompatible with serious reflection, as apt to awaken rebellious thoughts and impulses, as those fashionable recreations which fill the minds of so many worthy people with pious horror. And are these purists prepared to carry out their principles of exclusion by imposing a perpetual quarantine on unbelievers—by insisting on a total separation of professors from those who are still without the pale of the Church? Such a rigid non-intercourse, such a Chinese wall of intolerance, would assuredly repel the intrusion of the thoughtless votaries of pleasure, and counteract every effort to reclaim them from errors of practice scarcely less pernicious than errors of opinion. It is in the intercourse of society, the interchange of courtesy and kindness, the offices of friendship and benevolence, that piety assumes its most winning and amiable aspect. It is there that youth, attracted by its mild and steady cheerfulness, ceases to be giddy and volatile, and, unscared by the asperity of reproof, imbibes unwittingly the lessons of true wisdom. Surely every one, however adverse to the defilements of the world, must confess that the slight evil arising from promiscuous society is more than compensated by these advantages. If such be the moral benefits accruing from the example of religious men in the intercourse of private life,

can any reason be assigned why their participation in the diversions of the stage would not eventually redeem those diversions from the opprobrium of fostering the vicious propensities of mankind? The efficacy of their power over public opinion was displayed in the cleansing of that moral leprosy which infected the whole mass of society in the sixteenth century; and surely the defects of the theatre are not so inveterate but that in this more refined and enlightened age they would yield to the same sanitary influence.

An objection to dramatic amusements which has operated with as much force as any on the religious world is the loose and dissipated habits by which actors are too frequently distinguished. It is said that to encourage theatres is, in truth, to patronize an idle, worthless, and abandoned class of people; and the question is asked emphatically whether it comports with the principles of religion to lavish upon a set of drones and vagabonds, who are nuisances in society, those resources which in justice should be appropriated to more meritorious objects. It must be acknowledged that the character of the Thespian tribe is not, in general, formed upon the most exalted model of moral purity; but their laxity of principle and conduct may, I am persuaded, be traced to the same causes which have occasioned the deterioration of the drama. Were audiences more select, did they exercise a more fastidious and discriminating taste, not only would plays be more pure and their representation more decorous, but the improvement would reach even the personal character of the performers. Whatever lends dignity to the histrionic profession must assuredly tend to elevate the character of those who embrace it; and when theatrical exhibitions are recognized among the legitimate vehicles of moral instruction, the actor, no longer a degraded minister to the diversion of the vulgar, the frivolous and the dissolute, might justly aspire to a place among those who labor to promote the best interests of mankind. The calling of an actor would then be deemed useful and respectable, and men of real worth might engage in it without the fear of disgrace. The vacancies in our dramatic corps would be recruited, not from the dregs of society, from out-

casts driven to the stage as a last resource against penury, but from men of talents and education, who would not disdain a pursuit which, while it afforded the means of honorable support, might become a powerful instrument for the moral reformation of society.

Admitting, however, that actors, from the very nature of their occupation, have an irreclaimable proclivity to vice—which is the most unfavorable view of the case—it does not follow that the character of the performers furnishes a sufficient reason for rejecting dramatic entertainments. Let the solidity of this objection be tested by its application to analogous cases. Are not those concerned in the exhibition of other public shows and spectacles exposed, by parity of reason, to the same moral contamination? And yet who scruples to attend the concert of an itinerant musician or visit a menagerie of wild beasts, not to mention a variety of other diversions? In such cases does any man inquire what is the moral conduct of those who pocket his money? But if, indeed, there be any propriety in avoiding the theatre because players are not distinguished for sobriety of deportment, it is palpable that the principle must reach much further. Pursuing this idea through all its bearings on the relations of life, it would require that we should countenance no profession having a tendency, real or supposed, to weaken our moral and religious principles; that we should purchase nothing of any man without inquiry into his character and the character of those by whom the article was fabricated; that, like douce Davie Deans, we should employ neither physician nor lawyer without previously ascertaining the orthodoxy of his faith and the rectitude of his practice. For if it be wrong to patronize players because they are a wicked and perverse generation, on the same ground it must be equally reprehensible to swell by our encouragement the gains of a merchant or manufacturer whose conduct is open to exception. Some very worthy people are fully persuaded that the practice of law is calculated to unsettle the religious belief and pervert the moral perceptions of its professors. Must lawyers, therefore, be put under the ban and driven like lepers from the bosom of so-

ciety? Again: it is confidently believed by many that the business of retailing merchandise has a demoralizing effect upon the characters of men, because it presents such frequent temptations to petty fraud and deception. Must a similar interdict, therefore, be proclaimed against merchants? Or is any man so circumspect or scrupulous as to reject this useful and profitable calling lest his moral principles should be corrupted? On the contrary, it is the occupation, above all others, which in this country of trade and commerce is embraced with equal eagerness by saint and sinner as the certain avenue to wealth and consequence. But it were endless to enumerate the absurdities necessarily involved in the practical application of such a principle. No man could or would act upon it in the ordinary intercourse or business of life, because it would disturb the current of human affairs with an eternal and unnatural warfare, and eventually dissolve the very elements of society. But the advocates of this principle may allege that an obvious distinction exists between pursuits essential to our comfort and subsistence and those that conduce merely to our amusement. If there be an indispensable necessity to patronize the undeserving, there would be some force in such an idea, but are there not many cases in which no such necessity can be pretended? Among a multitude of instances take the example of a worthless mechanic. What compels us to employ him in preference to one of less skill but of more blameless deportment? And yet in that case no one hesitates when it suits his interest or convenience to bestow his patronage on the least meritorious. Indeed, the distinction referred to is never recognized in matters of business, and rarely in matters of mere amusement. Who ever objected to the purchase of Hume's history because the writer was an infidel? If Walter Scott and Washington Irving were notorious sceptics or men of profligate character, is there any principle of ethics or religion that forbids the purchase of their writings, supposing them to be in other respects unexceptionable? No one, I am sure, would maintain the affirmative of such a proposition; yet in the case stated our countenance and support would be given to men whose con-

duct and principles we did not approve, not from the compulsion of an overruling necessity, but simply as a matter of personal gratification.

But it is insisted that the money bestowed on the diversions of the theatre might be more usefully, and therefore more commendably, employed. So, indeed, might every expenditure devoted to the purchase of innocent pleasure. And will it be argued that every application of money not of absolute necessity or utility is criminal? If we dedicate a portion of our resources to the promotion of literature and the fine arts, not to speak of various other indulgences not forbidden by the most rigid, are we to be condemned as selfish and extravagant because they might have been applied to more important purposes? As well might it be said that we should clothe ourselves in the coarsest apparel and subsist on the rudest fare because the money lavished on costly garments and comfortable living might have been better expended in the relief of the poor or the advancement of some religious undertaking. Were such a self-denying principle adopted in practice, all the elegancies and superfluities of life must be abandoned, and we should exhibit the singular spectacle of surrendering at this advanced stage of society all the benefits of civilization.

Let me not be misunderstood. I do not justify that exclusive selfishness which absorbs everything in the vortex of its own gratification, nor leaves a peculium to bestow on the great enterprises of philanthropy. But the guilt in all such cases consists in the inordinate indulgence, and it is a maxim undeniably true that pleasure should always yield to the demands of duty. But, subject to this limitation and the obligations of temperance, it is clear to my understanding that Providence designed us to partake of every enjoyment not absolutely criminal in its nature. So far as this discussion is concerned, the true question seems to be whether any principle of morality or religion forbids dramatic representations in the abstract as sinful and demoralizing; for if there be no such principle, it is just as venial to appropriate, within reasonable limits, our means to that recreation, when

properly regulated, as to any other gratification admitted to be innocent.

The uncompromising hostility of the religious world to the theatre would have some definite object if its total suppression were an achievement within the range of probability; but such an enterprise is rendered utterly hopeless when we consider the innate love of mankind for public spectacles and the multitude remaining unconnected with the Christian churches. Indeed, were it practicable, I question whether success would fulfil the wishes of its most zealous promoters—whether, in truth, the evil designed to be eradicated would not be reproduced in a form more deleterious than its original prototype. If the annals of history be consulted, it will be found that some species of public exhibition has been popular and prevalent among all nations, ancient and modern, barbarous and refined. The propensity for such amusements must therefore be deeply seated in human nature; and the question is whether this natural craving for shows and spectacles will not be gratified in some shape in despite of all opposition. If the drama be prohibited, is there not danger that some diversion more pernicious in its tendency will usurp its place? Such an apprehension, authorized as it is by the original propensities of mankind, derives additional strength from our actual experience. With what insatiable eagerness of curiosity do the people of this country throng to the circus, the menagerie, and every sort of public spectacle! In these favorite pastimes there is nothing to refine the taste, to inform the understanding, to move the affections, to improve the heart. All the evils imputed to the theatre appear there in an aggravated form, with none of its redeeming advantages, and when they shall have thoroughly debased the public mind the transition will be easy to the more cruel sports of our ancestors. Shall we be much benefited by the substitution of such vulgar shows as these for the more intellectual diversions of the playhouse? We must take man as he is, and since we cannot change his nature, it is the part of wisdom to use all the means within our reach to cultivate and refine it.

In a political no less than a moral point of view the charac-

ter and tendency of public spectacles is of the utmost importance to the community. It was shrewdly remarked by Fletcher of Saltoun that had he the composition of its popular songs and ballads he would have no difficulty in moulding to his wishes the feelings and opinions of any nation; but, potent as these are in forming the popular character, they are scarcely more influential than public shows and amusements. And, indeed, the latter have been deemed in some countries of such vital consequence to the well-being of the community that they have been made the subject of legislative regulation. An interference with such matters by the government, other than to maintain good order and to punish flagrant outrages on decency and morals, would be repugnant to the genius of our institutions; and therefore no remedy remains to us for the multiplied abuses to which such exhibitions are liable but the corrective of an enlightened public opinion. Theatres, then, will continue to exist, but whether for good or evil depends upon the character of those by whom their action will be controlled. If left to the exclusive government of bad men and an undiscerning populace, they will surely degenerate into the nurseries of vice, the organized seminaries of licentiousness, infidelity, sedition, and violence. Is it not of the utmost consequence to the peace of society, to the permanence of our political institutions, to the interests of morality and religion, that these pestilential consequences should be averted? I call upon all good men, and more especially I invoke the religious community, to interpose a barrier to the advent of these wide-spreading evils. If they will take a prominent part in the applause and censure which determine the course and manner of dramatic exhibitions, the stage will become—what it was intended to be in its original institution—the fast friend and faithful ally of virtue. There was a time when men distinguished for the strictness of their morals and their zeal in the cause of religion esteemed it no crime to witness theatrical entertainments—when Addison, Johnson, Moore, and a host of literary worthies sustained the cause of the drama both by their countenance and writings. The authority of great names, I acknowledge, should not overrule the convictions of reason,

but surely a diversion sanctioned by such persons as these cannot be altogether unworthy the care of the wise and good.

But the reformation of the theatre involves other considerations of great and vital importance. It is, in fact, the only school where a numerous class of people can imbibe refined sentiments or correct ideas of literary composition. The bulk of those who frequent the playhouse at the present day are composed of unlettered, unpolished men, and the drama has consequently assumed a tone and character adapted to their coarse and vulgar perceptions. Hence it is, as has been already remarked, that broad farce and low comedy have predominated on the modern stage—that grimace and buffoonery command louder applause than the most striking efforts of the histrionic art; and this degraded condition of the drama, reacting on the audience, has tended still further to vitiate the public taste. Did men of cultivated minds and a nice sense of propriety constitute the larger portion of such assemblies, this miserable trash would be no longer tolerated, and the representation of the standard works of genius would soon beget among the more ignorant spectators greater delicacy of sentiment and juster notions of literary merit. In ancient times the populace of Athens were remarkable for their acuteness and discrimination, because both in their public spectacles and assemblies their taste was chastened and purified by the finest specimens of poetry and eloquence that the world has ever witnessed. It was not that the Athenians were more enlightened than their Grecian contemporaries, or that they derived their pre-eminence in literature and the fine arts from any peculiarity of physical organization. So far as the diffusion of knowledge is concerned, they were far inferior to the people of Europe and America. Their acute perception of the beauties of style and proprieties of conduct was not an innate endowment, nor yet an indication of uncommon intellectual development, but sprang from the constant cultivation of their taste by the efforts of those great orators and philosophers whose genius shed such splendor on the history of that republic. What a contrast to the Athenian people is presented by the rude and ferocious rabble of Rome, who took far less

interest in the debates of the Forum and the Senate than in the cruel and brutalizing exhibitions of the amphitheatre! It is evident, then, that public diversions are a most important element in the formation of national taste and character; and this importance is still further enhanced by the intimate connection subsisting between mental and moral cultivation. Among these diversions the theatre is almost the only one which furnishes entertainment to all classes, and which from its nature can be made subservient to the literary improvement of the uneducated part of society. I conclude, therefore, that morals, politics, and literature are alike interested in the restoration of the drama to its primitive purity, and that while the pious and enlightened remain either hostile or indifferent to this great enterprise it can never be successfully prosecuted.

D.

II.

THE following matter, selected from an old-time London publication, will afford the reader an insight into the fluctuating condition of theatrical affairs previous to the advent of David Garrick:

At a time when many theatres were employed to divert the public, and when none of them were in a flourishing state, the imprudence and extravagance of a gentleman who possessed genius, wit, and humor in a high degree obliged him to strike out a new species of entertainment, which in the end produced an extraordinary change in the constitution of the dramatic system. To extricate himself out of difficulties in which he was involved, and probably to revenge some indignities which had been thrown upon him by people in power, that admirable painter and accurate observer of life, the late Henry Fielding, determined to amuse the town at the expense of some persons in high rank and of great influence in the political world. For this purpose he got together a company of performers, who exhibited at the theatre in the Haymarket under the whimsical title of

"The Great Mogul's Company of Comedians." The piece he represented was *Pasquin*, which was acted to crowded audiences for fifty successive nights. Encouraged by the favorable reception this performance met with, he determined to continue at the same place the next season, when he produced several new plays, some of which were applauded and the rest condemned. As soon as the novelty of the design was over a visible difference appeared between the audiences of the two years. The company, which, as the play-bills said, dropped from the clouds, was disbanded, and the manager, not having attended to the voice of economy in his prosperity, was left no richer nor more independent than when he first engaged in the project.

The severity of Mr. Fielding's satire in these pieces had galled the minister to that degree that the impression was not erased from his mind when the cause of it had lost all effect. He meditated, therefore, a severe revenge on the stage, and determined to prevent any attacks of the like kind for the future. In the execution of this plan he steadily persisted, and at last had the satisfaction of seeing the enemy which had given him so much uneasiness effectually restrained from any power of annoying him in the public theatres. An act of Parliament, passed in the year 1737, forbade the representation of any performance not previously licensed by the Lord Chamberlain, or in any place, except the city of Westminster and the liberties thereof, where the royal family should at any time reside. It also took from the Crown the power of licensing any more theatres, and inflicted heavy penalties on those who should hereafter perform in defiance of the regulations in the statute. This unpopular act did not pass without opposition. It called forth the eloquence of Lord Chatham in a speech wherein all the arguments in favor of this obnoxious law were answered, the dangers which might ensue from it were pointed out, and the little necessity for such hostilities against the stage clearly demonstrated. It also excited an alarm in the people at large, as tending to introduce restraints on the liberty of the press. Many pamphlets were published against the principle of the act, and it

was combated in every shape which wit, ridicule, or argument could oppose it in. All these, however, availed nothing; the minister had resolved, and the Parliament was too compliant to slight a bill which came recommended from so powerful a quarter. It therefore passed into a law, and freed the then and all future ministers from any apprehension of mischief from the wit or malice of dramatic writers.

THE EARL OF CHATHAM'S SPEECH

Against the Bill entitled "An Act made to Explain and Amend so much of an Act made in the Twelfth Year of the Reign of Queen Anne, entitled 'An Act for Reducing the Laws relating to Rogues, etc.,' as relates to common Players of Interludes."

My Lords: The bill now before you I apprehend to be of a very extraordinary, a very dangerous, nature. It seems designed not only as a restraint to the licentiousness of the stage, but it will prove a most arbitrary restraint on the liberty of the stage; and I fear it looks yet further. I fear it tends toward a restraint on the liberty of the press, which will be a long stride toward the destruction of liberty itself. It is not only a bill, my Lords, of a very extraordinary nature, but has been brought in at a very extraordinary season and pushed with most extraordinary despatch. When I considered how near it was to the end of the session, and how long this session had been protracted beyond the usual time of the year—when I considered that this bill passed through the other House with so much precipitancy as even to get the start of a bill which deserved all the respect and all the despatch the forms of either House of Parliament could admit of—it set me upon inquiring what could be the reason of introducing this bill at so unseasonable a time and *pressing* it forward in a manner so very singular and uncommon. I have made all possible inquiry, and as yet, I must confess, I am at a loss to find out the great occasion. I have, 'tis true, learned from common report without-doors that a most seditious, a most heinous, farce had been offered to one of the theatres—a farce for which the authors ought to be punished

in a most exemplary manner. But what was the consequence? The master of that theatre behaved as he was in duty bound and as common prudence directed: he not only refused to bring it upon the stage, but carried it to a certain honorable gentleman in the administration as the surest method of having it suppressed. Could this be the occasion of introducing such an extraordinary bill, at such an extraordinary season, and pushing it in so extraordinary a manner? Surely no: the dutiful behavior of the players, the prudent caution they showed upon that occasion, can never be a reason for subjecting them to such an arbitrary restraint. It is an argument in their favor, and a material one, in my opinion, against the bill. Nay, further, if we consider all the circumstances, it is, to me, a full proof that the laws now in being are sufficient for punishing those players who shall venture to bring any seditious libel upon the stage, and consequently sufficient for deterring all players from acting anything that may have the least tendency toward giving a reasonable offence. I do not, my Lords, pretend to be a lawyer—I do not pretend to know perfectly the power and extent of our laws, but I have conversed with those who do, and by them I have been told that our laws are sufficient for punishing any person that shall dare to represent upon the stage what may appear, either by the words or representation, to be blasphemous, seditious, or immoral. I must own, indeed, I have observed of late a remarkable licentiousness in the stage. There have but very lately been two plays acted which, one would have thought, should have given the greatest offence, and yet both were suffered to be often represented without disturbance, without censure.*

In one the author thought fit to represent the three great pro-

* The late H. Fielding, Esq., whose licentiousness as an author chiefly contributed toward drawing on the resentment of a minister, and thereby occasioned the heavy hand of power to fall on the stage in general, whereby the innocent suffered with the guilty,—this same gentleman, as a magistrate, with specious and fallacious arguments (stolen from Mandeville and others) has occasioned some laws to be made which give such unlimited power to justices of the peace as may, by degrees, prove the entire destruction of our once-boasted liberty and lay the foundation of the most tyrannic and arbitrary power.

fessions, religion, physic, and the law, as inconsistent with common sense; in the other, a most tragical story was brought upon the stage, a catastrophe too recent, too melancholy, and of too solemn a nature to be heard of anywhere but from the pulpit. How these pieces came to pass unpunished I do not know. If I am rightly informed, it was not for want of law, but for want of prosecution, without which no law can be made effectual. But if there was any neglect in this case, I am not convinced it was not with a design to prepare the minds of the people, and to make them think a new law necessary.

Our stage ought certainly, my Lords, to be kept within due bounds, but for this our laws, as they stand at present, are sufficient. If our stage-players at any time exceed those bounds, they ought to be prosecuted—they may be punished. We have precedents, we have examples, of persons having been punished for things less criminal than either of the two pieces I have just mentioned.

A *new* law must therefore be unnecessary, and in the present case it cannot be unnecessary without being dangerous. Every unnecessary restraint on licentiousness is a fetter upon the legs, is a shackle upon the hands, of liberty. One of the greatest blessings we enjoy—one of the greatest blessings a people, my Lords, *can* enjoy—is liberty; but every good in this life has its alloy of evil. Licentiousness is the alloy of liberty: it is an ebullition, an excrescence—it is a speck upon the eye of the political body, which I can never *touch* but with a gentle, with a trembling hand, lest I destroy the body, lest I injure the eye upon which it is apt to appear. If the stage becomes at any time licentious, if a play appears to be a libel upon the government or upon any particular man, the king's courts are open, the law is sufficient for punishing the offender; and in this case the person injured has a singular advantage: he can be under no difficulty to prove who is the publisher. The players themselves are the publishers, and there can be no want of evidence to convict them.

But, my Lords, suppose it true that the laws now in being are not sufficient for putting a check to, or preventing, the

licentiousness of the stage; suppose it absolutely necessary some new law should be made for that purpose; yet it must be granted that such a law ought to be maturely considered, and every clause, every sentence—nay, every word—of it well weighed and examined, lest, under some of those methods presumed or pretended to be necessary for restraining licentiousness a power should lie concealed which might afterward be made use of for giving a dangerous wound to liberty. Such a law ought not to be introduced at the close of a session, nor ought we, in the passing of such a law, depart from any of the forms prescribed by our ancestors for preventing deceit and surprise.

There is such a connection between licentiousness and liberty that it is not easy to correct the one without dangerously wounding the other. It is extremely hard to distinguish the true limit between them. Like a changeable silk, we can easily see there are two different colors, but we cannot easily discover where the one ends or where the other begins. There can be no great and immediate danger from the licentiousness of the stage. I hope it will not be pretended that our government may before next winter be overturned by such licentiousness, even though our stage were at present under no sort of legal control. Why, then, may we not delay till next session passing any law against the licentiousness of the stage? Neither our government can be altered nor our constitution overturned by such a delay; but by passing a law rashly and unadvisedly our constitution may at once be destroyed and our government rendered arbitrary. Can we, then, put a small, a short-lived, inconvenience in the balance with perpetual slavery? Can it be supposed that a Parliament of Great Britain will so much as risk the latter for the sake of avoiding the former?

Surely, my Lords, this is not to be expected were the licentiousness of the stage much greater than it is—were the insufficiency of our laws more obvious than can be pretended. But when we complain of the licentiousness of the stage and the insufficiency of our laws, I fear we have more reason to complain of bad measures in our polity and a general decay

of virtue and morality among the people. In public as well as private life the only way to prevent being ridiculed or censured is to avoid all ridiculous or wicked measures, and to pursue such only as are virtuous or worthy. The people never endeavor to ridicule those they love and esteem, nor will they suffer them to be ridiculed: if any one attempts it, the ridicule returns upon the author; he makes himself only the object of public hatred and contempt. The actions or behavior of a private man may pass unobserved, and consequently unapplauded, uncensured, but the actions of those in high stations can pass neither without notice nor without censure or applause; and therefore an administration without esteem, without authority among the people, let their power be ever so great, let their power be ever so arbitrary, they will be ridiculed. The severest edicts, the most terrible punishments, cannot entirely prevent it. If any man, therefore, thinks he has been censured upon any of our public theatres, let him examine his actions—he will find the cause; let him alter his conduct—he will find a remedy. As no man is perfect, as no man is infallible, the greatest may err, the most circumspect may be guilty of some piece of ridiculous behavior. It is not licentiousness, it is a useful liberty, always indulged the stage in a free country, that some great men may there meet with a just reproof which none of their friends will be free enough—or rather faithful enough—to give them. Of this we have a famous instance in the Roman history. The great Pompey, after the many victories he had obtained and the great conquests he had made, had certainly a good title to the esteem of the people of Rome; yet that great man by some error in his conduct became an object of general dislike; and therefore in the representation of an old play, when Diphilus the actor came to repeat these words, *Nostra miseria tu es magnus*, the audience immediately applied them to Pompey, who at that time was as well known by the name "magnus" as by the name Pompey, and were so highly pleased with the satire that, as Cicero says, they made the actor by their clamor repeat the words a hundred times over. An account of this was immediately sent to Pompey, who, instead of resenting it as an injury, was so wise as to take it for a just

reproof. He examined his conduct, he altered his measures, he regained by degrees the esteem of the people, and then he neither feared the wit nor felt the satire of the stage. This is an example which ought to be followed by great men in all countries. Such accidents will often happen in every free country, and many such would probably have afterward happened at Rome if she had continued to enjoy her liberty. But this sort of liberty in the stage came soon after, I suppose, to be called licentiousness; for we are told that Augustus, after having established his empire, restored order in Rome by restraining licentiousness. God forbid we should in this country have order restored or licentiousness restrained at so dear a rate as the people of Rome paid for it to Augustus!

In the case I have mentioned, my Lords, it was not the poet that wrote (for it was an old play), nor the players that acted (for they only repeated the words of the play), it was the people, who pointed the satire; and the case will always be the same. When a man has the misfortune to incur the hatred and contempt of a people, when public measures are despised, the audience will apply what never was, what could not be, designed as a satire on the present times. Nay, even though the people should not apply, those who are conscious of guilt, those who are conscious of the weakness or wickedness of their own conduct, will take to themselves what the author never designed. A public thief is apt to take the satire, as he is apt to take the money, which was never designed for him. We have an instance of this in the case of a comedian of the last age—a comedian who was not only a good poet, but an honest man and a quiet and good subject. The famous Molière, when he wrote his *Tartuffe*—which is certainly an excellent and a good moral comedy—did not design to satirize any great man of that age; yet a great man in France at that time took it to himself, and fancied the author had taken him as a model for one of the principal and one of the worst characters in that comedy. By good luck, he was not the licenser; otherwise, the kingdom of France had never had the pleasure—the happiness, I may say—of seeing that play acted; but when the players first proposed to act it at Paris he had interest enough

to get it forbid. Molière, who knew himself innocent of what was laid to his charge, complained to his patron, the Prince of Conti, that, as his play was designed only to expose hypocrisy and a false pretence to religion, it was very hard it should be forbid being acted, when at the same time they were suffered to expose religion itself every night publicly upon the Italian stage; to which the prince wittily answered, "'Tis true, Molière: Harlequin ridicules Heaven and exposes religion; but you have done much worse—you have ridiculed the first minister of religion."

I am as much for restraining the licentiousness of the stage, and every other sort of licentiousness, as any of your Lordships can be; but, my Lords, I am, I shall always be, extremely cautious and fearful of making the least encroachment upon liberty; and therefore, when a new law is proposed against licentiousness, I shall always be for considering it maturely and deliberately before I venture to give my consent to its being passed. This is a sufficient reason for my being against passing this bill at so unseasonable a time and in so extraordinary a manner; but I have many reasons for being against passing the bill itself, some of which I shall beg leave to explain to your Lordships. The bill, my Lords, at first view may seem to be designed only against the stage, but to me it plainly appears to point somewhere else. It is an arrow that does but glance at the stage; the mortal wound seems designed against the liberty of the press. By this bill you prevent a play being acted, but you do not prevent its being printed; therefore, if a license should be refused for its being acted, we may depend on it the play will be printed. It will be printed and published, my Lords, with the refusal in capital letters on the title-page. People are always fond of what's forbidden. *Libri prohibiti* are in all countries diligently and generally sought after. It will be much easier to procure a refusal than it ever was to procure a good house or a good sale; therefore we may expect that plays will be written on purpose to have a refusal; this will certainly procure a good sale. Thus will satires be spread and dispersed through the whole nation, and thus every man in the kingdom may—and prob-

ably will—read for sixpence what a few only could have seen acted, and that not under the expense of half a crown. We shall then be told, "What! will you allow an infamous libel to be printed and dispersed which you would not allow to be acted? You have agreed to a law for preventing its being acted; can you refuse your assent to a law for preventing its being printed and published?" I should really, my Lords, be glad to hear what excuse, what reason, one could give for being against the latter after having agreed to the former, for I protest I cannot suggest the least shadow for an excuse. If we agree to the bill now before us we must—perhaps next session—agree to a bill for preventing any plays being *printed* without a license. Thus, my Lords, from the precedent now before us we shall be induced—nay, we can find no reason for refusing—to lay the press under general license, and then we may bid adieu to the liberties of Great Britain.

But suppose, my Lords, it were necessary to make a new law for restraining the licentiousness of the stage—which I am very far from granting—yet I shall never be for establishing such a power as is proposed by this bill. If poets and players are to be restrained, as other subjects are, by the known laws of their country—if they offend, let them be tried, as every Englishman ought to be, by God and their country. Do not let us subject them to the arbitrary will and pleasure of any one man. A power lodged in the hands of one *single* man to judge and determine without limitation, without any control or appeal, is a sort of power unknown to our laws, inconsistent with our constitution; it is a higher, a more absolute power than we trust even to the king himself; and therefore I must think we ought not to vest any such power in His Majesty's Lord Chamberlain. When I say this, I am sure I do not mean to give the least, the most distant, offence to the noble duke who now fills the post of Lord Chamberlain; his natural candor and love of justice would not, I know, permit him to exercise any power but with the strictest regard to the rules of justice and humanity. Were we sure his successors in high office would always be persons of such distinguished merit, even the power to be established by this bill could give

me no further alarm than lest it should be made a precedent for introducing other new powers of the same nature. This, indeed, is an alarm which cannot be prevented by any hope, by any consideration; it is an alarm which, I think, every man must take who has a due regard to the constitution and liberties of his country.

I shall admit, my Lords, that the stage ought not, upon any occasion, to meddle with politics; and for this very reason, among the rest, I am against the bill now before us. This bill will be so far from preventing the stage's meddling with politics that I fear it will be the occasion of meddling with nothing else; but then it will be a political stage *ex parte*. It will be made subservient to the politics and schemes of the court only. The licentiousness of the stage will be encouraged instead of being restrained; but, like court journalists, it would be licentious only against the patrons of liberty and the protectors of the people. Whatever man, whatever party, opposes the court in any of their most destructive schemes, will upon the stage be represented in the most ridiculous light the hirelings of a court can contrive. True patriotism and love of public good will be represented as madness, or as a cloak for envy, disappointment, and malice, whilst the most flagitious crimes, the most extravagant vices and follies, if they are fashionable at court, will be disguised and dressed up in the habit of the most amiable virtues.

This has formerly been the case. In King Charles the Second's days the playhouse was under a license; what was the consequence? The playhouse retailed nothing but the politics, the vices, and the follies of a court—not to expose them, no, but to recommend them; though it must be granted their politics were often as bad as their vices, and much more pernicious than their other follies. 'Tis true, the court had at that time a great deal of wit—it was then, indeed, full of men of true wit and humor—but it was the more dangerous; for the courtiers did then, as thorough-paced courtiers always will do: they sacrificed their honor by making their wit and humor subservient to the court only; and what made it still more dangerous, no man could appear against them. We know

that Dryden, the poet-laureate of that reign, always represents the Cavaliers as honest, brave, merry fellows and fine gentlemen. Indeed, his fine gentleman, as he generally draws him, is an atheistical, lewd, abandoned fellow, which was at that time, it seems, the fashionable character at court. On the other hand, he always represents the Dissenters as hypocritical, dissembling rogues or stupid, senseless boobies. When the court had a mind to fall out with the Dutch, he wrote his *Amboyna*, in which he represents the Dutch as a pack of avaricious, cruel, ungrateful rascals; and when the Exclusion Bill was moved in Parliament, he wrote his *Duke of Guise*, in which those who were for preserving, and securing the religion of their country were exposed under the character of the Duke of Guise and his party, who leagued together for excluding Henry the Fourth of France from the throne on account of his religion.

The city of London was made to feel the partial and mercenary licentiousness of the stage at the time, for the citizens had at that time, as well as now, a great deal of property, and therefore they opposed some of the arbitrary measures which were then begun, but pursued more openly in the following reign; for which reason they were then always represented upon the stage as a parcel of designing knaves, dissembling hypocrites, griping usurers, and cuckolds into the bargain.

My Lords, the proper business of the stage, and that for which it is only useful, is to expose those vices and follies which the laws cannot lay hold of, and to recommend those beauties and virtues which ministers or courtiers seldom imitate or reward. But by laying it under a license—and under an arbitrary court license, too—you will, in my opinion, entirely pervert its use; for though I have the greatest esteem for that noble duke in whose hands this power is at present designed to fall, though I have an entire confidence in his judgment and impartiality, yet I may suppose that a leaning toward the fashions of a court is sometimes hard to be avoided. It may be difficult to make one who is every day at court believe that to be a vice or folly which he sees daily practised by those he loves and esteems. By custom even

deformity itself becomes familiar, and at last agreeable. To such a person, let his natural impartiality be ever so great, that may appear to be a libel against the court which is only a most just and a most necessary satire upon the fashionable vices and follies of the court. Courtiers, my Lords, are too polite to reprove one another; the only place where they can meet with any just reproof is a free though not a licentious stage; and as every sort of folly generally, in all countries, begins at court, and from thence spreads through the country, by laying the stage under an arbitrary court license, instead of leaving it what it is, and always ought to be, a gentle scourge for the vices of great men and courtiers, you will make it a canal for propagating and conveying their vices and follies through the whole kingdom.

From hence, my Lords, I think it must appear that the bill now before us cannot be so properly a bill for restraining licentiousness, as it may be called a bill for restraining the liberty of the stage; and restraining it, too, in that branch which in all countries has been the most useful; therefore I must look on the bill as a most dangerous encroachment upon liberty, likewise an encroachment on property. Wit, my Lords, is a sort of property: it is the property of those that have it, and too often the only property they have to depend on. It is, indeed, but a precarious dependence. Thank God! we, my Lords, have a dependence of another kind; we have a much less precarious support, and therefore cannot feel the inconveniences of the bill now before us; but it is our duty to encourage and protect wit, whosoever's property it may be. Those gentlemen who have any such property are all, I hope, our friends; do not let us subject them to any unnecessary or arbitrary restraint. I must own I cannot easily agree to the laying of any tax upon wit; but by this bill it is to be heavily taxed; it is to be excised, for if the bill passes it cannot be retailed in a proper way without a permit; and the Lord Chamberlain is to have the honor of being chief gauger, supervisor, commissioner, judge, and jury. But, what is still more hard, though the poor author—the proprietor, I should say—cannot perhaps dine till he has found out a purchaser,

yet before he can propose to seek for a purchaser he must patiently submit to have his goods rummaged at this new excise-office, where they may be detained fourteen days; and even then he may find them returned as prohibited goods, by which his chief and best market will be for ever shut against him; and that without any cause, without the least shadow of reason, either from the laws of his country or the laws of the stage.

These hardships, this hazard, which every gentleman will be exposed to who writes anything for the stage, must certainly prevent every man of a generous and free spirit from attempting anything in that way; and as the stage has always been the proper channel for wit and humor, therefore, my Lords, when I speak against this bill, I must think I plead the cause of wit; I plead the cause of humor; I plead the cause of the British stage and of every gentleman of taste in the kingdom. But it is not, my Lords, for the sake of wit only; even for the sake of His Majesty's Lord Chamberlain I must be against this bill. The noble duke who has now the honor to execute that office has, I am sure, as little inclination to disoblige as any man; but if this bill passes he must disoblige; he may disoblige some of his most intimate friends. It is impossible to write a play but some of the characters or some of the satire may be interpreted to point at some person or another, perhaps at some person in an eminent station. When it comes to be acted the people will make the application, and the person against whom the application is made will think himself injured, and will, at least privately, resent it. At present this resentment can be directed only against the author; but when an author's play appears with my Lord Chamberlain's passport every such resentment will be turned from the author and pointed directly against the Lord Chamberlain, who by his stamp made the piece current. What an unthankful office are we therefore, by this bill, to put upon His Majesty's Lord Chamberlain!—an office which can no ways contribute to his honor or profit, and yet such an one as must necessarily gain him a great deal of ill-will and create him a number of enemies.

The last reason I shall trouble your Lordships with for my

being against the bill is, that, in my opinion, it will no way answer the end proposed; I mean the end openly proposed, and I am sure the only end which your Lordships propose. To prevent the acting of a play that has any tendency to blasphemy, immorality, sedition, or private scandal can signify nothing unless you can likewise prevent its being printed and published. On the contrary, if you prevent its being acted, and admit of its being printed and published, you will propagate the mischief; your prohibition will prove a bellows which will blow up the fire you intend to extinguish. This bill can therefore be of no use for preventing either the public or the private injury intended by such a play, and consequently can be of no manner of use, unless it be designed as a precedent, as a leading step, toward another for subjecting the press likewise to a licenser. For such a wicked purpose it may indeed be of great use; and in that light it may most properly be called a step toward arbitrary power.

Let us consider, my Lords, that arbitrary power has seldom or never been introduced into any country at once; it must be introduced by slow degrees; and, as it were, step by step, lest the people should perceive its approach. The barriers and fences of the people's liberty must be plucked up one by one, and some plausible pretences must be found for removing or hoodwinking one after another those sentries who are posted by the constitution of every free country to warn the people of their danger. When these preparatory steps are once made, the people may then, indeed, with regret see slavery and arbitrary power making long strides over their land, but it will then be too late to think of avoiding or preventing the impending ruin. The stage, my Lords, and the press are two of our out-sentries; if we remove them, if we hoodwink them, the enemy may surprise us. Therefore I must look upon the bill now before us as a step—and a most necessary step, too—for introducing arbitrary power into this kingdom. It is a step so necessary that if ever any future ambitious king or guilty minister should form to himself so wicked a design, he will have reason to thank us for having done so much of the work to his hand; but such thanks, or thanks from such a man, I

am convinced every one of your Lordships would blush to receive and scorn to deserve.

And then the bill passed!

III.

DAVID GARRICK'S FIRST APPEARANCE.

DAVID GARRICK made his first appearance at "Goodman's Fields." That theatre did not possess a patent; therefore the performance of *Richard the Third* could only be given by introducing it as a gratuity between parts of an operatic entertainment. The following bill of the play shows the manner in which the theatrical law was evaded:

Oct. 19, 1741.

Goodman's Fields.

At the Theatre, Goodman's Fields, this day will be performed
A Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music,
Divided into Two Parts.
Tickets, 3s. 2s. and 1s.
Places for the Boxes to be taken at the Fleece Tavern, near the Theatre. N. B. Between the Two Parts of the Concert will be presented an Historical Play, called
The Life and Death of King Richard the Third.
Containing the Distresses of King Henry VI.
The artful acquisition of the Crown by King Richard.
The murder of young King Edward V. and his Brother in the Tower. The landing of the Earl of Richmond.
And the death of King Richard in the memorable battle of Bosworth Field, being the last that was fought between the Houses of York and Lancaster; with many other true Historical Passages.
The part of KING RICHARD, by a Gentleman
(who never appeared on any stage).

King Henry, by Mr. Giffard; Richmond, Mr. Marshall; Prince Edward, by Miss Hippesley; Duke of York, Miss Naylor; Duke of Buckingham, Mr. Paterson; Duke of Norfolk, Mr. Blades; Lord Stanley, Mr. Paget; Oxford, Mr. Vaughan; Tressell, Mr. W. Giffard; Catesby, Mr. Marr; Ratcliff, Mr. Crofts; Blunt, Mr. Naylor; Tyrrell, Mr. Puttenham; Lord Mayor, Mr. Dunstall. The Queen, Mrs. Steel; Duchess of York, Mrs. Yates.

And the part of LADY ANNE, by Mrs. Giffard.

With Entertainments of Dancing,

By Monsieur Fromet, Madame Duvalt, and the two Masters and Miss Granier.

To which will be added, a Ballad Opera, in one Act, called

The VIRGIN UNMASKED.

The part of Lucy, by Miss Hippesley.

Both of which will be performed gratis, by Persons for their Diversion.

The Concert will begin exactly at Six o' Clock.

IV.

THE theatrical fashion of the times has recorded everything concerning the excellence of that great actor, David Garrick, while it has been considered only something short of heresy to republish any matter reflecting on the weak points of his character or on the defects of his acting. When we consider the exclusive control he exercised over the fortunes of actors and the drama, we are led to believe in the old saying, "All that glitters is not gold." The history of the stage, as well as that of politics, shows how much of *tinsel* can be palmed off for *true* metal by the glare and glitter of sophisticated laudation.

Mr. Theophilus Cibber, the son of Colley Cibber, though

"a pestiferous fellow" and "a discontented paper," as he was termed by the believers in Mr. Garrick's assumed dramatic supremacy, found among the judicious few, as well as the unthinking many, those who were not chained to the chariot-wheels of the "*little* great monarch" of the stage, and who endorsed the honest opinions of adverse criticism that, though a *great* actor, Garrick had faults which he shared in common with all possessing qualities of true excellence. No man was better qualified to comment on the usurpation of "patentees" and "theatrical managers" than Theophilus Cibber.

The following article will interest those who desire to hear more than one side of this question. David Garrick had honors enough heaped upon him to "sink a navy." That he did not deserve them all is quite probable, and that his merits were not, as is generally supposed, universally acknowledged, is certain. "Grey" wrote to Chute: "Did I tell you about Garrick, that the town are 'horn mad' after?" . . . "There are a dozen dukes of a night sometimes at Goodman's Fields, and yet I am stiff in the opposition." Horace Walpole, in a letter to Sir Horace Mann dated 26th May, 1742, thus reported his opinion of Garrick at that early but brilliant period of his career: "But all the run is now after Garrick, a wine-merchant, who is turned player at Goodman's Fields. He plays all parts, and is a very good mimic. His acting I have seen, and may say to you, who will not tell it again here, I see nothing wonderful in it, but it is heresy to say so; the Duke of Argyle says he is superior to Betterton." Criticism in favor of Garrick and against him raged to such an extent during his career that it was wellnigh impossible to come to any just conclusion as to his merits.

DISSERTATIONS ON THEATRICAL SUBJECTS.

BY THEOPHILUS CIBBER, COMEDIAN (LONDON, 1759).

To come nearer our own times. Did not the truly pious and learned Archbishop Tillotson, speaking of plays, say, "They might be so framed and governed by such rules as not only to be innocently diverting, but instructive and useful to put some follies and vices out of countenance which cannot perhaps be so decently reproved, nor so effectually exposed and corrected, any other way"? Nay, that inveterate enemy of the stage, Collier, allows, as an undeniable truth, "That the wit of man cannot invent anything more conducive to virtue and destructive to vice than the drama."

From Queen Elizabeth's time to the breaking out of that unnatural rebellion in 1641, the number of playhouses was seldom less than eight, and sometimes double that number, the London and Westminster were then scarcely a tenth part so large as at present, and the frequenters of theatres are now increased an hundred-fold.

Every theatre then had its particular patrons among the nobility, and the stage in general was thought worthy the encouragement of that glorious princess. This appeared in the countenance, favor, and protection she gave to all the sons of the Muses, especially the dramatic poets. Then a Fletcher, Jonson, and Shakespeare arose and enriched the stage with their admirable compositions. A queen patronized them, her nobles followed the great example; a Southampton at one time made a present of one thousand pounds to his honored friend Shakespeare—a gift then equal to five times that sum now.*

* After the burning down of Covent Garden Theatre, by which Mr. John Kemble lost his *all*, he met Mr. John Taylor, to whom he related the following:

"A gentleman waited on me by desire of the duke of Northumberland to express His Grace's sincere concern for the melancholy event which had occurred, and to signify that if £10,000 would be of use to me in the present emergency, His Grace would order that this sum should be advanced to me. I expressed my gratitude as well as my surprise at so generous an offer, but desired the gentleman to say that as it never

In these and some following reigns such honors were done to dramatic compositions that the noblest personages of the court—nay, crowned heads—have thought it no impeachment of their honor or good sense not only to become spectators, but were performers in many plays and masques acted at court, to decorate which no expense was spared.

In Rhymer's *Fœdera* we find a copy of a license under the privy seal granted by King James the First for the establishing and supporting a company of comedians, not only in London, but in any part of England; which grant was made to Cowley, Armyn, Sly, Condel, Hemings, Phillips, Burbage, Fletcher, and the immortal Shakespeare. These were all actors, and several of them poets—a sensible, honorable, and happy junction.

During that reign, and part of King Charles the First's, the theatres were encouraged; then poets and actors reaped the harvest of their own labors, till Puritanism prevailed, when, with much zeal and little knowledge, they began their attacks on the stage, and in a heavy load of dull abuse licentiously libelled all the encouragers of plays of what degree soever.

Soon after the Restoration the theatres again revived, and two patents were granted by King Charles the Second—one to form a company to be called "the King's," the other "the Duke's." They were severally granted to Sir William Davenant and Mr. Killigrew. But both these patentees found it prudent to take some principal actors into shares with them. Accordingly, Mr. Mohun, Mr. Hart, Mr. Kynaston, and other actors became partners with Mr. Killigrew, as did Mr. Betterton, Mr. Smith, Mr. Harris, Mr. Underhill, and others with Sir William Davenant.

could be in my power to repay His Grace, I felt myself obliged to decline his noble offer. The gentleman called on me again to repeat the offer; and I then said I must still decline to avail myself of His Grace's kindness, for that, so far from being able to repay the principal of so large a sum, I did not think it would ever be in my power to discharge even the interest. The gentleman took this message to His Grace, but called on me a third time to tell me that His Grace made the offer as an act of friendship, and therefore he should never require from me either interest or principal."

But these patents became afterward branched out into different hands, and were purchased in parcels by the indolent and ignorant, who so oppressed the actors that on their just complaints, made to the Earl of Dorset, then Lord Chamberlain, he not only heard but redressed their grievances. He took the most effectual method for their relief. The learned of the law were advised with, who then (as many have since) gave it as their opinion that if acting of plays were *malum in se* (in itself criminal), no royal sanction ought or could protect it; but, as neither law nor common sense had ever deemed it so, patents and licenses were thought proper grants from the Crown, and that no patent from any former king could tie up the hands of a succeeding prince from granting the like authorities.

On this representation King William, of glorious memory, granted a license to Messrs. Kynaston, Betterton, Dogget, Bowman, Underhill, Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Bracegirdle, and others to form a company and act for themselves.

And a voluntary subscription was soon raised to build 'em a theatre, which they opened on Easter Monday, 1695, with that admirable comedy, then new, called *Love for Love.* There they continued about ten years, till a license from Queen Anne being granted to Sir John Vanbrugh and Mr. Congreve, these forementioned actors were influenced by hopes of large rewards to act under these new managers. But in two seasons these gentlemen, the men of great parts, wit, and sense, from their inexperience and want of knowledge in the various branches of stage-management, soon found themselves disappointed, not only in their flattering prospects of gain, but were unable to make good their contracts.

Then the late Mr. Swinny agreed with Sir John for the use of his house, cloaths, scenes, etc. at a certain rent. This was no sooner effected but the actors flew from their ignorant tyrant of Drury Lane (who had got the patents by unaccountable methods into his hands) and played under Mr. Swinny, who took Mr. Wilks, Mr. Cibber, and Mr. Dogget into the management with him. The theatre again revived, and the actors began to know the sweets of being honestly and regularly paid

their due. I have heard several who acted in that company declare they in one season received two hundred days' pay.

The royal patents, being again sold out in several parcels, became the property of gentlemen who were too much attached to their pleasures to allow so much time and attention as was necessary for carrying on the business of the theatre. The patents being united, the proprietors, to save themselves trouble, deputed an agent to act for them. He was, perhaps, one of the most dull yet cunning mortals that ever by stupidity spoiled a good project, or by craft and chicanery got the better of unguarded men of superior parts. Mr. Cibber, Sr., in his *Apology*, observes that "this good master was as sly a tyrant as ever was at the head of a theatre, for he gave the actors more liberty and fewer days' pay than any of his predecessors. He would laugh with them over a bottle, and bite 'em in their bargains, he kept them poor, that they might not be able to rebel, and sometimes merry, that they might not think of it."

This was the net the actors danced in for several years; but no wonder the actors were dupes, while their master was a lawyer; and he often showed the proprietors (who entrusted him with the management of their patent) that he knew enough of the wrong side of the law to lead them a long chace in Chancery for many years together. Thus did he perplex and embroil their affairs till he tired 'em out and got the power into his own hands.

There being then but one company, the actors found themselves all reduced in their salaries (low enough before), and an *indulto* was laid of one-third of the profits of their benefits for the use of the patentee.

These and other of his repeated acts of injustice and stupid tyranny made the actors join in a body to appeal for redress to the then Lord Chamberlain.

They again were heard, and again found redress. An order came from that office to silence the patentee and to supersede his power. The authority of the patentee no longer subsisting, the confederate actors walked out of the house, to which they never returned till they became tenants and masters of it.

However, this cunning shaver, having once made himself sole monarch of the theatrical empire, at his death left the quiet possession of that power to his son.

After the *supersedeas* of the patent the power of acting plays was, by a court license and a court interest, shifted into different hands during the latter part of Queen Anne's reign. But the nominal director (appointed by the court), leaving the management thereof entirely to Messrs. Wilks, Cibber, and Dogget, contented himself with the certainty of receiving an annual income of seven hundred pounds—no inconsiderable stipend for doing nothing.

On the happy accession of His Majesty King George the First to the crown of Great Britain, Sir Richard Steele obtained a patent as governor of His Majesty's company of comedians, and Messrs. Wilks, Cibber, and Booth were made joint directors and sharers with him. During their administration (which lasted near twenty years) the business of the stage was so well conducted that authors, actors, and managers had never enjoyed more mutual content or a more general prosperity.

Then it was that the polite world, by their decent attention, their sensible taste, and their generous encouragement of authors and actors, showed that the stage under a due regulation was capable of being what the wisest ages thought it might be—the most rational scheme that human wit could form to dissipate with innocence the cares of life; to allure even the turbulent or ill-disposed from worse meditations; and to give the leisure hours of business and virtue an instructive recreation. Then authors were treated like gentlemen, and actors with humanity. Those managers never discharged an actor unless his total neglect of their business compelled them to it. The actor then who, through sickness, accident, or age, became an invalid, still enjoyed his salary—nay, had his benefit in turn—nor dreaded poverty being added to his other misfortunes. Of this benevolence and generosity they gave many instances.

The patent granted to Sir Richard Steele was for his life and to his assigns for three years after. He died in the year 1729.

In the year 1732 a new patent was granted to Messrs. Cibber, Wilks and Booth; soon after, Mr. Booth (whose unhappy illness had for some years past deprived the stage of one of its chief ornaments) sold a moiety of his share. Not long after the stage suffered an irreparable loss by Mr. Wilks quitting that and life together. His widow took a nominal partner into her share. I farmed Mr. Cibber, Sr.'s, share till he sold it.

Toward the end of that season Mr. Booth died. As the merits of Mr. Booth and Mr. Wilks were universally admired, no wonder their loss was universally lamented. They left the judicious lovers of the theatre in despair of seeing their equals.

In the month of September, in the year 1733, myself and a large body of comedians found an asylum in the Haymarket Theatre, protected by a generous town against the despotic power of some petulant, capricious, unskilful, indolent, and oppressive patentees. At that juncture a patent granted as a reward to actors of merit by being privately stockjobbed became the property of some who proved by the event they had more money than knowledge of what they had trafficked for.

The actors, who chose not such unskilful governors, and who reasonably supposed they could guide themselves, had taken a lease of Drury Lane Theatre, but being illegally shut out of that by the then patentees, they were reduced to the necessity of acting in the little theatre of the Haymarket till by course of law they were restored to their right in the other. 'Twas here that upward of a hundred successive nights as many crowded audiences loudly spoke in favor of our attempts. And, to crown all, when the laws were strained to crush us, a lord chief-justice whose memory ought ever to be adored asserted our liberty and defended us against the heavy hand of power that sought to oppress us.

The endeavors of the patentees to suppress the comedians proved ineffectual, and the haughty treatment they met with from those patentees rendered all possibility of a reunion impossible. Then Mr. Fleetwood bought the patent and theatrical stock at an easy price; the actors returned and listed under

his banner on advantageous terms to both parties. For a while the manager reaped a plenteous yearly harvest. 'Twere invidious to dwell on this gentleman's errors, which threw the stage again into confusion, and so reduced his own affairs he found it necessary to retire to France (where he died); at which time, to satisfy a mortgage by a decree in Chancery, his patent was sold to the best bidder, and became the property of Messrs. Green and Amber, who admitted Mr. Lacy as a third sharer, and invested him with the whole power. The purchasers, who were bankers, failed soon after. Then Mr. Lacy contrived not only to purchase their shares, but had address enough to gain a promise of a new patent, the old one being near expiring. To this patent he admitted Mr. Garrick as partner, who is now become sole manager, the other seeming content with his share of the profit.

The characters of nations, as well as private persons, are best known by their pleasures. This allowed, of what consequence to this island is the conduct of our theatres when we consider what numbers of foreigners, of various countries and different degrees of distinction, through curiosity or interest pour into this vast metropolis, and frequently make a part of those crowded audiences the managers of playhouses have so happy an occasion to boast of! Does it not behoove us to look into the conduct of those managers of playhouses who are honored with so weighty a trust as the uncontrollable direction of our monopolized diversions?

This, perhaps, is little considered by the greater number of spectators, who go to the theatre merely as an idle amusement to while away the hours or dissipate the spleen, as humor, leisure, indolence, or fashion leads them.

If we consider this general humor of dissipation in which people go to plays, we shall no longer wonder we hear of frequent loud applauses most lavishly and indiscriminately bestowed. If they are amused, they care not how, and seldom stay to ask their judgments the question whether the greatest absurdities have not met with the greatest encouragement, and whether patentees and players have not joined in laying a foundation for a false, disgraceful taste.

Does not this call loudly for reformation? It rests on you, gentlemen, who are properly called "the Town."

Wit, good sense, and politeness were always thought necessary to support the character and dignity of the stage, and that the management of it ought to be entrusted to persons justly qualified to judge of all performances fit to be introduced there, that works of genius might meet with proper encouragement, and dulness and immorality be effectually excluded.

Has this been the constant conduct of the present grand director? I am about to speak but of one now: that one will afford ample theme enough.

Let us, then, view the acting manager of Drury Lane. In the year 1747 he opened that theatre with an excellent prologue, the conclusion of which gave the town to hope it would be their fault if, from that time, any farcical absurdity of pantomime or fooleries from France were again intruded on them.

It was the town who were, from that auspicious night of his theatrical inauguration,

> To bid the reign commence of rescued Nature and reviving Sense,
> To change the charms of Sound and pomp of Show
> For useful Mirth and salutary Woe—
> Bid scenic Virtue form the rising age,
> And Truth diffuse her radiance from the stage.

But has he kept his word during his successful reign? Has the stage been preserved in its proper purity, decency, and dignity? Have no good new plays been refused or neglected? Have none but the most moral and elegant of the old ones been revived? Have we not had a greater number of those unmeaning fopperies miscalled "entertainments" than ever was known to disgrace the stage in so few years? Has not every year produced one of these patchwork pantomimes —these masqueing mummeries, replete with ribaldry, buffoonery, and nonsense, but void of invention, connection, humor, or instruction—these Arabian kickshaws or Chinese festivals —these (call 'em what you please, as any one silly name may suit them all alike)—these mockeries of sense—these

larger kind of puppet-shows—these idle amusements for children and holiday fools, as ridiculously gaudy as the glittering pageantry of a pastry-cook's shop on a Twelfth Night? Could he plead necessity for this introduction of theatrical abuse, this infamy of the stage, this war upon wit in behalf of levity and ignorance? No. He wanted no encouragement to establish the theatre on a reputable foundation without these auxiliaries. His theatre was constantly crowded, his performances applauded, nor did the spectators grudge paying the raised prices for a play alone. If he feared this taste for good sense would not last, it was at least worth a little longer trial.

But avarice is ever in haste to increase its store; it never stays to consider what is most laudable when what may prove most profitable is the question.

Our politic man of power, therefore, would not lose this opportunity of being in full possession of the favor of the town to introduce these motley mummeries, while he had it in his power to make everything go down that he judged for his ease or profit. In consequence whereof, what large rewards have been given to the compiler of these interludes, stolen from the stale night-scenes of Saddler's Wells and Bartholomew Fair!—such rewards as would have satisfied some authors of merit for as many good plays.

More money is annually squandered on one of these foolish farces than, judiciously laid out, would decorate three or four tragedies or comedies, in the bringing forward of which the time (lost on the other) might be more eligibly employed.

Has this little giant-queller, who stepped forth in his prologue and promised the town to drive exotic monsters from the stage—has he kept his word? On the contrary, has he not commissioned

> "Great Harlequin to lay the ghost of wit?
> Exulting Folly hails the joyful day,
> And Pantomime and Song confirms her sway."

'Tis true he has given us some new plays, and we have been constantly told that each succeeding one was to be more ex-

cellent than the former. So pregnant of promises were our stage-puffers, the echoes of their little monarch, to have given them credit one must have imagined all former poets men of little genius, compared to the all-bepraised writers for the present stage. But, unluckily for the moderns, and happily for the reputation of the old writers, the productions of both are printed. Could the pen or pencil describe or delineate the graces and excellences of some former actors, we should not be pestered with impertinent comparisons, or a preposterous preference of any living actor to a Booth or a Betterton, as we have been with a profusion of praise equally bestowed on a *Barbarossa* and the noble productions of Otway and Shakespeare; yet till *Barbarossa* was printed what a paradise of pompous praise was lavished on it!

Unless a play comes strongly recommended from some high interest, how difficult it is to get it read, and how much more difficult it is even then to have it acted, is well known to several who have gone through the ridiculous ceremony, and to many more who scorned the attendance required by these stage-dictators. To gain admittance to them is frequently more difficult than to come at a prime minister.

How droll to see the mockeries of state when one of these petty princes is surrounded by his little theatrical dependants, watching the motion of his eye, all joyous if he deigns to smile, as downcast if his looks are grave or fallen! But if the pleasant prince condescend to joke, like Sir Paul Pliant they are prepared to laugh incontinently. They stand like Anthony's kings, "who, when he said the word, would all start forth like school-boys to a muss." Thus is the little pride of a manager puffed up by the servile adulation of his theatrical dependants, who, poor unhappy objects of pity! never consider their abject state. Use has made their fetters easy to 'em, yet how natural is it to demand, as on the entrance of the blacks in *Oroonoko*, "Are all these wretches slaves?"—"All, all slaves—they and their posterity all slaves"!

From hence this mock prince presumes to expect such solicitation as gentlemen every way his superiors cannot stoop to. Then what avails the merit of a play while such monop-

olizers can prevent its appearance? What man of spirit will undergo the ungenteel treatment he is like to meet with from salacious triflers? Thus many a piece is lost to the town that perhaps had given credit to the stage.

I will venture to affirm there is now in being some dramatic pieces (of which I have been favored with a perusal) no ways inferior (I shall not say too much if I add of superior merit) to most that a partial patentee, in his wantonness of power, has thrust upon the town, and by his stage-politics has supported for an unusual number of nights. Such is the power of our stage-dictators, who may cry out, Drawcansir-like,

"All this I do, because I dare."

The common put-off to an author when the patentee is not inclined to serve him is, "The thing is pretty, to be sure; there's merit in it, but it wants alteration." Yet if it was altered they had not time; their hands are full; the business of their season fully planned; they have not a night to spare; and such paltry put-bys as no one believes, not even themselves who say 'em. Not to dwell on the indifferent plays they have acted, or some of more merit that may have been refused by 'em, let us inquire a little what mighty business has so employed their time that not a few nights can be found to give an author fair play. The present season (1776) is now about half over, and what has been done? Why, the town has been entertained with a frequent repetition of their old plays and stale farces, and one farce, entitled *The Fair Quaker of Deal*, has been palmed upon the town as a revived comedy, and exhibited a greater number of nights than formerly better plays, much better acted, were ever known to reign. As Bartholomew Fair has been some years suppressed, the politic manager contrived to introduce drolls on the stage at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. 'Twas usual with the masters of droll-booths to get some genius of a lower class to supply 'em with scenes detached from our plays, altered and adapted to the taste of the holiday audiences they were commonly performed to. This hint the manager has taken, and

of this gallimanfry kind was the pastoral (as he called it) exhibited at Drury's Theatre.

The *Winter's Tale* of Shakespeare, though one of his most irregular pieces, abounds with beautiful strokes and touching circumstances. The very title, *A Winter's Tale*, seems fixed on by the author as an apology for, and a bespeaking of, a loose plan, regardless of rule as to time or place. The story affected his mind and afforded a large field for his lively imagination to wander in; and here the poet,

> "Fancy's sweetest child,
> Warbles his native wood-notes wild."

In the alteration many of the most interesting circumstances, the most affecting passages, and the finest strokes in writing, which mark the characters most strongly and are most likely to move the heart, are entirely omitted, such as the jealousy of Leontes, the trial of Hermione, etc. What remains is so unconnected, is such a mixture of piecemeal, motley patchwork, that the *Winter's Tale* of Shakespeare, thus lopped, hacked, and docked, appears without head or tail. In order to curtail it to three acts the story of the first three acts of the original play, and which contain some of the noblest parts, are crowded into a dull narrative, in the delivery of which the performer makes no happy figure. So at the beginning of the third act the principal parts of the story, which in the alteration we might have expected to have seen represented, were given in two long-winded relations by two unskilled performers, whose manner made 'em appear "as tedious as a twice-told tale, vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man." And this hasty hash or hotchpotch is called altering Shakespeare! Whenever Shakespeare is to be cut up, let's hope some more delicate hand and judicious head will be concerned in the dissection.

> "Let's carve him like a dish fit for the gods,
> Not hew him like a carcass fit for hounds."

Were Shakespeare's ghost to rise, would he not frown indignation on this pilfering peddler in poetry, who thus shame-

fully mangles, mutilates, and emasculates his plays? The *Midsummer Night's Dream* has been minced and fricasseed into an indigested and unconnected thing called *The Fairies;* the *Winter's Tale* mammocked into a droll; *The Taming of the Shrew* made a farce of; and *The Tempest* turned into an opera. Oh, what an agreeable lullaby might it have proved to our beaus and belles to have heard Caliban, Sycorax, and one of the devils trilling of trios! And how prettily might the north wind (like the tyrant Barbarossa) be introduced with soft music! To crown all, as the Chinese festival proved the devil of a dance, how cleverly might it have been introduced in *The Tempest,* new-vamped as a dance of frolicsome devils!

Yet Master Garrick would insinuate all this ill-usage of the bard is owing, forsooth! to his love of him—much such a mock proof of his tender regard as the cobbler's drubbing his wife. In the two last bellman-like nonsensical lines of his absurd prologue to the *Winter's Tale* he tells you

> "That 'tis his joy, his wish, his only plan,
> To lose no drop of that immortal man!'

Why, truly, in the afore-mentioned pieces he does bottle him up with a vengeance! He throws away all the spirited part of him, all that bears the highest flavor, then to some of the dregs adds a little stuff of his own, and modestly palms it on his customers as wine of the first growth. A pleasant beverage to offer gentlemen by way of *bonne bouche!* Did ever tricking vintner brew so scandalously? But thus it will be till his playhouse-puffers are thoroughly inquired into, and that it is publicly made known both who and what they are; a number of which, to the amount of some hundreds, are made free of the house, or sent occasionally in with orders by one of his agents, who from thence, in mockery, is not improperly called the "orderly" sergeant. From hence the great applause that always is lavishly bestowed on everything that is brought on that stage. But when these placemen, as they may be literally called, are pointed out, as little regard will be paid to the claps of these mercenaries as to the bawling hirelings in Smithfield, who are appointed to roar out, "Gentlemen, this is the

only booth in the fair. The wonder of the world is here, gentlemen."

We'll now drop the patentee a while, and look into the merits of the actor. That he often deserves all the applause a favorable audience may bestow will not be denied; that he always deserves it is a question; that he is a great genius is allowed; but that judgment does not always direct his spirit will not, sure, be thought too bold an assertion. Whatever wants there may be in a performer which are the defects of Nature cannot be too tenderly touched, but errors of the judgment demand reproof, and wilful errors, substituted in the room of truth, demand more: they ought to be pointed out, they ought to be exploded. When an actor prostitutes his profession for the vain satisfaction of a false applause, such paltry ambition should be checked by the severest censures of the public.

The faults or affectations of the ignorant or undeserving never fall under the cognizance of censure, being in their nature beneath it; but the faults of men of acknowledged merit and genius call on every lover of his country and of taste for an antidote against the delicious poison of their errors, which is so greedily swallowed by the young and unexperienced. Seneca, a man of wit and learning, despairing to rival the sober and masculine eloquence of his predecessors, stepped aside for help to all the meretricious arts of affectation and quaintness; he obtained what he proposed by the tinsel embroidery of a sparkling, flashy style, and blazed forth the idol of the gaping multitude, while the judicious repined in secret at the rapidity of false taste, which made gigantic strides in the republic of letters. But, alas! what was the consequence? As far short as Seneca fell of those great writers, the true reflections of Nature, so did his imitators in regard to him; for, being devoid of his natural capacity and genius, they could attain nothing but his tricks of eloquence. Hence a general depravity of taste arose; of which the celebrated rhetor Quintilian, in his lessons to the youth of Rome, most pathetically complained, and gave wholesome admonitions to steer clear of the siren enchantments of Seneca's prismatic elocution.

It can be deemed no less than a compliment to any favorite actor in being to compare him to Seneca. Permit me, then, against a pleasing infectious example, in humble imitation of the rhetor, to hold up the test of Nature, experience, and taste. If this attempt may be thought worthy the attention of disinterested judges, let slavish hirelings bark out their dislike.

About fifteen years ago, when our lively hero first started up at Goodman's Fields, and met with that encouragement he deserved, flushed with applause after the long successful strides he had taken in Richard, he determined to step into tragic characters of a different cast. Having the theatres at this end of the town in his eye, he concluded that could he by any artful means damn the actors then playing at the two Theatres Royal, it would not a little contribute to his success. He therefore, with the policy of a Frenchman and the cunning of a Jesuit, contrived to depreciate the performance of those players in the opinion of the town previous to his stepping into their parts. He recollected *The Rehearsal* had been revived about two years before, and acted upwards of forty nights in one season at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden. The character of Bayes he thought he could pervert to his own use by indulging his artful spleen in mimicking the actors, and by turning the force of ridicule on them give victory and triumph to himself. On this the play was got up there, and Garrick's Bayes (not Buckingham's, as it then appeared) was pushed on several nights. Thus *The Rehearsal* was no longer considered as a witty satire on the foibles and faults of authors and a reproof of the town for their false taste of the drama. It became a motley medley of buffoonery to explode the actors.

But where did he attack 'em? On their weak side indeed, where they could not be on their guard. Instead of critically pointing out their want of taste or judgment, he cruelly turned the whole artillery of his mockery against their natural defects or such particularities of voice which did not misbecome them; nor met with reproof till his vice of "taking-off," as it is called, became the foolish fashion and taught school-boys to be critics.

His attempt to prejudice the million against his brethren had its desired effect: several were hurt by it. The late Mr. Delane in particular, a man of great modesty, was so shocked every time he came upon the stage after it that new terrors seized him; he could not get the better of his weakness, so became a votary to Bacchus and sacrificed his life at that shrine. If, poor man! he had been master of temper and resolution enough to have roused a proper spirit on this occasion, and had sought the improvement he was capable of in his profession, he might still have been giving pleasure to the town in several characters, such as Lord Hastings, Pyrrhus, Varanes, Bajazet, Antony, Hotspur, and Alexander; to these his power of voice, his comeliness of countenance, his graceful action, and dignity of deportment rendered him more equal than the actor who so wantonly attacked him; in which attack the mimic showed he could only transiently hit on some peculiar tones of the other's voice. It had been better for this mimic could he have equalled the actor in all his happier gifts of nature.

As this actor was thus indulged in his mimicking the defects of Nature, I hope I may be allowed to point out the less pardonable errors of judgment or more unpardonable tricks of the player knowingly introduced against the conviction of sense and judgment—those modern claptraps of the stage where reason is sacrificed to vanity; where vehemence supplies the place of spirit, and extravagances are called beauties; where mouthing and ranting pass for elocution, and the voice is so injudiciously forced that the power is lost ere half the part is played. A false *jeu de théâtre* becomes too often the vice of some present actors, but they are happy if they can thereby raise a clap from the million; no matter whether the applause is just, so it be loud. When stage-tricks become so frequent, may we not say,

> "Nature's forsook; our new theatric art,
> Aiming to strike the eye, neglects the heart"?

The actor I'm about to speak of has undoubtedly several natural requisites and some acquired talents, and altogether

is justly deemed a good comedian. His performance of Kitely, in *Every Man in His Humor*, is so excellent a piece of Nature, so truly comic, it makes amends for all the farce with which that indelicate piece of low humor abounds. But is not his chief talent comedy—not of genteel cast, but of the lower kind? This, perhaps, by a candid examen of his abilities and execution, may be made appear, as may his errors in tragedy. Some of those errors a gentleman of wit and great vivacity and admirable mimic has pleasantly pointed out and humorously exploded. The correction was of use to the actor; perhaps future remarks may be of further use to him.

If we look into his favorite character of Ranger, shall we not find less of the gentleman in the performance than the author intended in the writing? That he is exceeding lively and entertaining is certain; but that he is sometimes even most absurdly rude will appear by only remarking his ungentlemanlike behavior in one single scene. He meets with Frankly and Bellamy, both supposed to be gentlemen—Frankly particularly, a man of fashion and fortune. This very gentleman, without any regard to decency or good manners, Ranger makes his leaning-stock, and, lolling a considerable time on his shoulder, indulges himself in being pleasant on Bellamy. Can any friendship or intimacy tolerate such ill-bred freedom in a man—to consult his own ease without feeling the pain he must give his superior? Oh, but it's a pretty attitude, forsooth! He caught it, perhaps, from a French print, where a gentleman leans against the high base of a pillar in a garden; it took his fancy probably, and this *attitudinarian* was resolved to introduce it, no matter for the impropriety of making a gentleman his lolling-post.

This is but one of the many studied absurdities. How ridiculous might be the consequence if the person who plays Frankly were to give him the slip and drop Master Ranger to the ground! Though this might become Frankly as a humorous reproof of Ranger's rudeness, yet the poor player, whom necessity has taught to prefer slavery to the liberty of starving, must rather seem to think himself

honored by this impertinent freedom, as it comes from the manager.

That he displays in Archer great vivacity must be granted, but that the gentleman appears through the footman, or that his deportment and address are equal to the character when he puts on the habit of the gentleman, is what I never heard asserted. This, and the still superior characters in genteel comedy, seem now quite lost. We have strutting flashes and finical fribbles, pert prigs, bold bucks, and dapper smarts; but when do we meet on the stage a general character, supported with a graceful ease and elegancy expressive of the man of quality, or that gives any idea of a well-bred person used to polite assemblies or the manners of a drawing-room? Who is there at the head of the stage to set the example? We have seen a comedy revived and played to a surprising number of audiences wherein the person who performed the principal character was in an error from beginning to end, and yet the playhouse-puffers extolled it as the master-stroke of comedy. They rung the changes on the words "Amazing!" "Great!" "Surprising!" "Fine!" "Immense!" "Pleasant!" "Prodigious!" "Inimitable!" till every ear was tired with the sound. Any one who never saw the performance might have concluded from report that the fulsome flattery a certain writer bestowed on him was but truth when he said, "This actor was not only the most excellent of his profession that ever was, but that ever would be." I imagine ere I name the title of this comedy most people will guess I mean *The Chances*.

It has been remarked that the poet in this play, in his wantonness of humor and spirit, seemed determined to declare open war upon decency, and, scorning *double entendre*, speaks plain English. The chief business of the drama is barefaced prostitution. It was written by Fletcher, but it was so well suited to the taste of the loose wits of King Charles the Second's court that the witty debauchee Buckingham thought it worth his revisal and alteration.

Mr. Pope elegantly inveighs against plays of this cast, and justly satirizes the taste of those times, when the obscenity

of a piece was no objection if supported pleasantly. Perhaps this play was in his thoughts when he says—

> "The fair sat panting at a courtier's play,
> And not a mask went unimproved away;
> The modest fan was lifted up no more,
> And virgins smiled at what they blushed before.
> These monsters, critics, with your darts engage—
> Here point your thunder, here direct your rage."

The revival of this play undoubtedly laid the sober part of the town under no small obligation to the immaculate manager.

But, however incorrect or loose the plan of this play appears, the author certainly drew his characters from Nature, and supports 'em well—*servetur ad unum.*

I apprehend that it readily appears to any one who reads this play that in Don John the poet meant to give us a spirited representation of a young nobleman on his travels. However gay his youth or wild his constitution, he entertains high notions of honor; gallantry is but a secondary principle of his character. He never deviates from the stately pride of a Spaniard, though he receives a challenge and fights a duel with a nonchalance of temper that nothing but the greatest courage can support. To personate this noble, joyous voluptuary there should be comeliness, grace, a spirited dignity, and ease; he should appear the rake of quality, not a pert prig let loose on a holiday. In his most unguarded frolics we should not lose sight of the nobleman. In this light, I am informed, did the character of Don John appear when the great Betterton played it; in this light have I beheld it when performed by that master of genteel comedy, Mr. Wilks.

But, as my friend the doctor says, "The college have altered all that now, and proceed upon an entire new principle." If an actor finds himself unequal to a part, why will he undertake a task imposed on him only by his own vanity? But, says this arch-manager, "'Tis the business of comedy to make people laugh. I can fill the part with pleasantry, though I neglect propriety; I have fashion on my side, and a faction to support me: none dare dispute my taste or

power. And if I can't rise to Don John, I'll bring Don John down to me." So enter Ranger in a Spanish jacket. Had it been a harlequin jacket, it would not have misbecome the part as it is now new modelled, where Nature is neglected, the gentleman entirely dropt, and lively absurdities with brisk buffooneries make up the strange melange. 'Tis no longer the noble Don John; 'tis a little Jack-a-dandy.

To point out particulars where the whole is absurd were endless. One is as good as a hundred. Only think of this young Spanish nobleman, because his ear is caught by the sound of a fiddle from the window of a tavern, being tempted to give you a touch of a hornpipe in the middle of the street! Is it in Nature to suppose any gentleman in his senses could be guilty of so ridiculous an absurdity? How must the stage improve from these lively specimens of genteel comedy! When an actor presumes to substitute the farcical liberties of a harlequin instead of a just representation of Nature, what must be his ignorance or what his assurance! What should be his reward if he thus deviates from the unerring rule that great judge of Nature, Shakespeare, lays down for his direction when he admonishes the player "to o'erstep not the modesty of Nature, . . . whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to Nature." . . . "This overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of which one ought to o'ersway a whole theatre of others"?

As this genius has a knack of slicing comedies into farces and frittering Shakespeare into drolls, pastorals, and operas, as we have many instances of his happy talents for altering and embellishing old plays, 'tis a pity he did not make a new one of *The Chances*. Had he but given English names to the characters and removed the scene to London, this, with the new manner of acting, might have made it pass for a new comedy under the well-adapted title of *The Delights of Dame Douglass; or, The Frolics of Master Jacky in Covent Garden.*

Though I have as quick a perception of the merits of this actor as his greatest admirers, and have not less pleasure from

his performance when he condescends to pursue simple Nature, yet I am not therefore to be blind to his studied tricks, his over-fondness for extravagant attitudes, frequent affected starts, convulsive twitchings, jerkings of the body, sprawling of the fingers, slapping the breast and pockets—a set of mechanical motions in constant use, the caricatures of gesture suggested by pert vivacity; his pantomimical manner of acting every word in a sentence; his unnatural pauses in the middle of a sentence; his forced conceits; his wilful neglect of harmony, even where the round period of a well-expressed noble sentiment demands a graceful cadence in the delivery. These, with his mistaken notions of some characters and many other vices of the stage which his popularity has supported him in, I shall take a proper opportunity of remarking in a more particular manner, and laying such observation before the superior judgment of the town.

An actor who is a thorough master of his part, not only in point of memory, but by having clearly conceived and entered into the spirit of the sentiment and expression, will stand in no need of premeditated gesture or attitude; the words and situation will of themselves suggest 'em to him, and they will appear the more natural, and consequently have the greater effect, for their not having the air of study and preparation. The various inflexions of voice, the stress of the emphasis, the just proportion of pathos, neither carried improperly into rant nor over-tame, but governed by the occasion,—all these will rise so naturally that the part will seem to act the actor, instead of being acted by him. The emotions, in short, should begin at the heart, and there's no doubt of the voice and body receiving such right directions from it as can never fail of making proper impressions; whilst moving of the head, legs, and arms by rule and compass must have comparatively a cold, insipid, and even a ridiculous effect.

Nor is this complaint a new one. Even in Aristotle's days there was an actor called Callipides who used to prefix his motions before he came on the stage; the affectation of it was so palpable that Minesius, his rival, nicknamed him "the ape," from the disfigurement which the characters he played

received from his trickful imitation. I call it "trickful," because all those forelaid attitudes, or puggifications, are the poor arts of those who are not capable of exhibiting—or, what is still worse, are insensible of—the beauty of Nature. Our stage in its present state affords more examples of those who follow the manner of a Callipides than of a Betterton or a Booth, who were not above receiving their directions from Nature, that great guide and president over all the imitative arts, and especially the theatre, from whence, however, she has been so long banished.

To this extravagance of behavior in acting, and to the applause thus frequently and easily gained, is it not owing that the epidemical distemper of "spouting" (according to the modern phrase) has spread itself so widely? When young men cease to consider acting as an art—an art, too, that requires perhaps more natural requisites, more acquired ones, more time, experience, study, and knowledge, than many others—we need not be surprised that so many candidates for fame are so ready to expose themselves. They regard it not in that light; they judge, from the extraordinary example set 'em, that a little ranting or mouthing, a start or two, an *outre* attitude, and a few harlequinade tricks are all the requisites to make a complete actor. And as managers, not so careful of the gradual improvement of the stage as greedy of present gain, too frequently allow raw, unexperienced men to start out in top characters (however unequal to 'em or hopeless of improvement), with a view that the bare novelty may draw an audience—and as such heroes, made in a hurry, are too ready to mistake the encouragement of an indulgent audience for an applause due to their superior merit—what hope is there of seeing a set of good actors completely and regularly formed?

Formerly, actors by degrees came forward; they began at the lower round of the ladder. But now they take a flying leap to the top at once, though, indeed, they generally drop as suddenly to the bottom. To this misconduct of the managers and bad example of the performers is it not owing that such a number of young men neglect their various professions,

for which their talents are more happily adapted, to follow this *ignis-fatuus* of stage fame? They think of nothing less than to be applauded heroes on the stage, and from thence, like their cousin Sir Francis (for they are all nearly related to the Wrongheads), propose to indulge themselves in the easy-gained income of a trifling thousand a year, "just to be doing with till somewhat better falls in." Though a few, a very few, may have succeeded, yet, alas! what a number of young people, disappointed of these flattering views, have in the end found themselves literally actor-bit! By this delusion many young men, to the grief of their parents and friends, have been lost to the world, who, had they followed the more eligible professions they were designed for, might have lived to have been a comfort to their friends, a joy to their families, an honor to themselves, and respectable members of public society.

I have heard of an academy intended to consist of a select number of gentlemen eminent for their taste in the belles lettres, and some whose works have the deserved estimation of the public; on which plan it will be proposed to support authors of merit; to give praise to the deserving and due censure to the dull and presuming; to show the many why they are pleased and with what they ought to be delighted. May that laudable scheme succeed, and prevent the depravity we are falling into, by rescuing sound sense and morality from the barbarous attacks of ignorance and Gothism! I have also heard that a weekly paper, under their inspection, will be published, entitled *The Theatre*, wherein no mean arts will be used to prejudice the public in favor of an unworthy author or actor, nor will any writer or performer of any degree of merit be depreciated through the wantonness of mirth or to gratify the vanity or spleen of another. Whenever this paper appears,

> Dread it, ye dunces and dramatic drones!
> Tremble, ye tyrants on theatric thrones!

Thus may the encroaching power of managers be properly checked, and rational entertainments alone become the polite amusement of the town; thus may our giddy and unwary

youth be cautioned against the dangerous illusions of Falsehood, who, in her gaudy trappings, oft bewilders their imaginations and enchantingly entices 'em to become her admirers, while they totally neglect the simply elegant beauties of unaffected Truth. 'Till this plan is put into execution—and I hope the interim will be but short—permit me humbly to propose an expedient for the immediate correction of theatrical misconduct.

Many public companies have proper officers appointed to inspect their conduct—some have their governors, some their directors—and our universities have their visitors. Since, then, these patentee potentates, out of their immense humanity and goodness, will allow me time from my avocation as an actor, what if I become the volunteer visitor of the theatres, to look into and report their proceedings, whether worthy of praise or censure? This is a post to which I can appoint myself. And if the thought meets with the approbation of my honored friends and patrons, I shall endeavor to discharge that office to the best of my abilities, with impartiality, integrity, and justice. Thus, in spite of their unjust oppression, I may still continue—what I have ever thought it an honor to be—the most obliged, devoted servant of the public. As a theatrical visitor, then, give me leave to lay before you some of the studied absurdities or Callipidean ape-tricks which are often substituted instead of the instinctive, unaffected actions which simple Nature would have directed.

Of this kind is the pantomimical acting of every word in a sentence. When Benedict says, "If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat, and shoot me!" methinks this slight, short sentence requires not such a variety of action as minutely to describe the cat being clapped into the bottle, then being hung up, and the further painting of the man shooting at it. But such things we have seen—nay, sometimes seen applauded.

Observe the golden rule of not too much; this rule every actor should pay regard to. But how is this observed when Richard (as I have seen it played), in his very first words, wherein he describes his sullen mood of mind, his restlessness of spirit unemployed in war, his conscious unfitness to join in

the sportive, piping, medley amusements of idle peace, ironically says,

> "I have no delights to pass away my hours,
> Unless to see my shadow in the sun
> And descant on mine own deformity."

This idea of descanting on his own deformity is what his hurt imagination would naturally turn to from the moment it occurs to him. But for the sake of an attitude which is sure to be dwelt on till the audience clap, this sentence is commonly closed with an action of pointing to the ground and fixing the eye thereon for some time, as if Richard had a real delight in ruminating on his uncouth person. Again, after he has wooed and (to his own surprise) has won the widow Anne, can we suppose that Richard is such a fool as really to think himself comely of person when he, exulting on his success, in wanton pleasantry breaks out—

> "My dukedom to a widow's chastity!
> I do mistake my person all this while"?

Or when he says,

> "I'll have my chambers lined with looking-glass,
> And entertain a score or two of tailors
> To study fashions to adorn my body"?

Richard is not such a simpleton seriously to intend this—'tis laughter all, and mockery of the widow's weakness—yet I have seen a Richard when he makes his exit with these lines—

> "Shine out, fair sun, till I salute my glass,
> That I may see my shadow as I pass,"—

this rum-duke Richard has gone halting off, all the way looking at and admiring his supposed shadow on the ground.

Is this being the actor? Is it not buffoonery? But what shall we think of a Richard who in the last act, when he is met by Norfolk in the field at the head of the army, instead of assuming the air of gallantry and intrepidity which marks the character of Richard,—what shall we think of a Richard

who bounces on like a madman and bellows out, "Well, Norfolk, what thinkest thou now?" Might not Master Norfolk reply, "I think you are mad, sir"? But the mouthing rant infected the inferior performer, who in return roared out, "That we shall conquer, sir."

Nay, to that extravagance is this mockery of spirit carried on that Richard reads the few lines Norfolk puts into his hand in a vociferous, angry tone, as if he knew their meaning ere he saw them, though the very lines that follow show that Richard is unmoved by 'em and scornfully disregards 'em: "A weak invention of the enemy!" But that cool scorn I have heard ranted out as if poor Richard was quite out of his wits. What consistency of character is here preserved, or what regard paid to Nature? Is it not mummery all?

The frequent starts with which our stage-performances abound at present are not unworthy notice. They are so common that they sometimes tire the eye, and often so improper that they offend the understanding. Some of this sort we have seen in Romeo. This unhappy lover, when in the last act he is informed of the death of his beloved Juliet, is at once struck with a deep despair, and immediately determines that night to embrace her, even in death. He coolly resolves on taking poison, and sends a letter to inform his father of the cause of his death. He has but little time to execute this in, the night being far spent, yet the actor can find time, it seems, between his quitting the apothecary and his going to the tomb, to shift his clothes, that he may die, with the decency of a malefactor, in a suit of black. This trick of stage-drapery puts one in mind of Miss Notable, a young jilting coquette, who, when she's informed that one of her young lovers is wounded in a duel on her account, amidst her affected violent exclamations of grief says, "I'll go and see the dear creature, but it shall be in an undress; 'twill be proper, at least, to give my grief the appearance of as much disorder as possible. Yes, I'll change my dress immediately." And so she does. But what need for Romeo to do this? Has he leisure, or would he bestow a thought on such a trifle? Well, but he's now going to the tomb; his first thought is to despatch his servant, from

whom he conceals his real intent, and threatens him to presume to watch him at peril of his life. Yet on the opening of the scene the actor with folded arms advances about three or four steps, then jumps and starts into an attitude of surprise. At what? Why, at the sight of a monument he went to look for. And there he stands till a clap from the audience relieves him from his post. Is not this forced? Is it not misplaced? Is it not as improper as ranting loudly those threats to his servant, which should be delivered in an under-voice expressive of terror, but not mouthed out loud enough to alarm the watch?

I would also submit it to the judgment of the public whether a favorite attitude into which Romeo throws himself on the appearance of Paris is a beauty or an absurdity. Romeo is a gentleman, and has a sword by his side. Education is a second nature: may we not reasonably suppose that on his being diverted from his purpose of opening the tomb, when called on by Paris he would immediately drop that unwieldy instrument the iron crow and have recourse to his sword? Would not this be the instinctive resource of the gentleman? But then this Callipidean attitude would be lost in which Romeo now stands long enough to give Paris time to run him through the body, which would be justifiable when a man saw such a weapon raised by an enemy to dash out his brains. No wonder the generality of an audience clap, as they may well be astonished to see my little Romeo wield this massy instrument with such dexterity. But their admiration would cease when let into the secret that this seeming iron crow is really but a painted wooden one. Were it not so, it would be as impossible for the fictitious Romeo to manage it as it is improbable the real Romeo would have made such a use of it. The author did not intend he should, since he makes 'em both engage with their swords, as gentlemen naturally would.

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During this ceremony news came from earth that the English opera called *The Tempest* was in no danger of pestering the town many nights, notwithstanding the puffs and orders to support it. This instance of returning taste, and the proper

contempt the public showed for these manglers of Shakespeare by forbearing to attend these savage scalpers of this immortal Bard, diffused a general joy amongst all the connoisseurs below. A loud applause re-echoed through the place, and wakened me. Yet, waking, I found it was not all a dream. The public reassume their right to judge; they no longer implicitly approve all the trash this crafty costardmonger would impose on 'em, nor on his *ipse dixit* will accept of a green crab in lieu of a pineapple. Even the last new tragedy, though paraded into the world with the usual puffs of "its excelling all that went before it," did not like its predecessors run rapid on, but limpingly endeavored to get forward. At length we found (as appeared by the *Public Advertiser*)—

> "Great Athelstan grew sick—oh fatal stroke!—
> Of empty seats and boxes unbespoke."

A fresh instance of the unbiased judgment of the public has appeared in their candid reception of Mr. Barry in the character of King Lear, and the universal applause they have bestowed on his excellent performance. This high-drawn character has been long the admiration of the public. One actor having the sole possession of it for these fourteen years past, and having surprised the town by his spirited and early performance of it, most people were so prejudiced in his behalf that many censured Mr. Barry for the undertaking previous to his appearing therein; nay, several as rashly as ungenerously (on notice given of the intended performance) did not stick to call it an impudent attempt. So strong is prepossession that some good-natured persons had their doubts concerning him, but, to do him justice, his performance has cleared 'em all. So whimsical were some of these prejudiced persons in their objections that they even urged he was too tall for the part; yet I think 'tis generally allowed that the advantage of tall stature is a beauty in Nature; it expresses a kind of natural dignity. When we read the history of any monarch or hero, we seldom annex the idea of a little man unless some passage in the history particularly marks him as such. Nor

have I ever heard of any dramatic law or act of Parliament to reduce our kings to the low standard in which they are sometimes represented.

I mean no reflections hereby on any one who may be disqualified, as I myself, for a grenadier, nor do I presume to hint that a great mind may not inhabit the small body of a man even of but five feet five inches. Long since it was remarked that "daring souls often dwell in little men." Not to give praise to the little gentleman for his performance in some parts of this character were doing him injustice; there is a quick-spirited manner in his execution that often sets off many passages therein. But when we consider the chief characterisic of Lear to be pride and impatience—a kingly pride, hitherto uncontrolled, and an impetuous temper, as soon susceptible of anger, rage, and fury as flax is ready to catch fire, and in the expression of those passions as quick and rapid as the lightning's flash,—if this is the case (and I have often heard it allowed), must we not give the preference to Mr. Barry, not only in majestic deportment and gracefulness of action, but also in his manner of imprecating the curse this injured monarch throws out against his unnatural daughter? Can the actor be too rapid in the delivery? Do not long pauses damp the fire of it, like cold water dropped thereon? 'Tis hasty, rash, and uttered in the whirlwind of his passion. Too long a preparation for it seems not consistent with Lear's character; 'tis here unnatural. Such long pauses give him time to reflect, which the hasty Lear is not apt to do till 'tis too late. This philosophic manner would become a man who took time to recollect, which if Lear did, would not the good king, the o'erkind father, change this dire curse into a fervent prayer for his child's repentance and amendment? To prepare this curse with an overstrained look of solemn address, long dwelt on before the curse begins, makes what the author designed to excite pity and terror become detestable and horrible. So dire is the curse Nature can scarce endure it unless delivered in the rapid manner, the wild transport of the choleric king, which sudden and unchecked passion would surely give it. When it appears premeditated it speaks rancor, spleen, and

malice, a cool revenge, not a burst of passion from an o'ercharged heart. Whether this remark is just is left to the determination of the judicious public.

I have seen both these gentlemen play King Lear within a few days of one another. I must confess I had pleasure from the performance of the lesser monarch in several passages. My expectations had indeed been greatly raised by the many encomiums lavished on him, but were not answered to my wish. There was a petiteness attended the performance which I thought not quite equal to the character—his behavior often liable to censure, particularly, I thought, at the end of those scenes where the unnatural behavior of his daughters works him up almost to frenzy. Do not the preceding and following parts point out to us that Lear rushes wildly from beneath the roof where he has been so unhospitably treated? Why, then, is he to sink into the arms of his attendants? Thus helpless as he there affects to appear, though his daughters turned him out of doors, surely his attendants would have conveyed him to some place of rest; yet by the play we find he roams into the wood, exposing himself unto the storm. Besides the error of this fainting-fit, let us examine how 'tis executed. His spirits being quite exhausted, he drops almost lifeless into the arms of his attendants. Do they carry him off? Why, no. Relaxed as we may suppose his whole machine is (for his head and body are both thrown extravagantly behind, as if his neck and back were broke), yet his knees (which in Nature would most likely falter first) are still so able to support him in that odd bent condition that he walks off with the regular stiff step of a soldier in his exercise on the parade. Is this consistent? is this natural? is this character? Does not this uncouth appearance, with his bent-back body and drooping head, rather resemble the uncomely distortion of a posture-master when he walks the "sea-crab," as they call it? By the introduction of such extravagances he seems to have borrowed a hint from our brother Bayes when he says, "I scorn your dull fellows who borrow all they do from Nature; I'm for fetching it out of my own fancy." And a pretty fancy it is, truly! I question if it would have

entered into the imagination of any other man. But, as Bayes again says, "It serves to elevate and surprise." Thus the actor is satisfied if he can gain a clap from the upper gallery, while the pit and boxes, with a silent shrug alone, condemn such outre behavior. Certainly, the author meant not this fainting-fit or that Lear should stay to be held. He rather meant the king, in hurry of his rage and grief, stung to the heart by those unnatural hags, should fly all roofs, shun all attendance, pomp, and ceremony—should strive in his agony of soul to fly himself if possible.

I have been informed (I know not how true it may be, though the story is not unlikely) that when Mr. Garrick first undertook the part of King Lear he went to a bedlam to learn to act a madman. It had not been a very improper school, perhaps, had he been to have played some of the low, ridiculous mad characters in *The Pilgrim;* but as we do not hear of any mad king being locked up there, I do not readily conceive how his visit to those elder brothers of the sky could answer his purpose. One might imagine his judgment (if he has any) might have suggested to him a considerable difference in the behavior of a real king, by great distress driven to distraction, and the fantasque of a poor mad tailor who in a kind of frolic delirium imagines himself a king. Though the mockery of King Cabbage might cause a smile with our pity, yet sure the deplorable situation of the real monarch would rather rive the heart than excite risibility.

I am at a loss to guess what end this visit to the palace in Moor-Fields could answer. 'Tis probable the most striking object he could fix his eye on, and the most worthy his attention, was placed over the gate to that entrance. I imagine no one would think Shakespeare would have paid such a visit to have learnt from the medley jargon of those unhappy maniacs matter to have furnished out his scenes of Lear's madness. No; his amazing genius, whose extensive imagination took in all Nature, and with a judgment adequate arranged his ideas, giving proper sentiment, language, and spirit to every character, when Lear's madness struck his raptured fancy, "the

poet's brain, in a fine fiery fit of frenzy rolling," wanted not such mean resources.

I have heard some persons objected that Mr. Barry would want pleasantry in the mad-scenes of *King Lear*. I must confess I was at a loss to know what they meant. Lear's madness claims a serious attention—sometimes excites our admiration, often moves our tears, and ever our pity and our terror. If a spectator of those scenes should be inclined to laugh, might not one suspect such spectator had no very delicate feeling, or that there was something absurd in the actor's performance? It may be observed that though Lear is turned of fourscore, yet he sinks not into the enervated or decrepit old man; he no more bends under age than as Nature (though in spirit and health) will at that time of day sometimes give way to ease. His deportment will still express the monarch.

I own I think Mr. Barry well deserved the uncommon applause he met with in this part. It may be a question whether in this character he has not shown more of the masterly actor than in all he has done before. His voice was well managed, his looks expressive, his deportment becoming the character, his actions graceful and picturesque; he meant well, and executed that meaning with a becoming dignity and ease. There appeared throughout a well-conducted variety and spirited propriety. His attitudes appeared the result of Nature, and by a happy transition from one to another they seemed not studied. He threw himself into 'em as if his immediate feeling alone directed him to the use of 'em.

There has lately appeared in some of our public papers the following epigram on the two Lears:

> "To praise the different Lears,
> To Barry they gave loud huzzas—
> To Garrick only tears."

A pretty conceit, but how if it is not quite true? For 'tis as certain that Mr. Garrick has had other applause besides tears as 'tis true that Mr. Barry, besides loud huzzas, has never failed to draw tears from many of his spectators. Were it injurious to the author of this epigram to suppose he was a

little hurt by Mr. Barry's success? Though it may be difficult to say who was the author, yet to guess who was hurt most by Mr. Barry's applause cannot be a very hard matter to guess.

Permit me, therefore, to deliver to you a reply to the foremention epigram. I believe it may fairly stand by the other, and is not the less poignant for its truth:

> "Critics, attend, and judge the rival Lears:
> Whilst each commands applause and each your tears,
> Then own this truth: Well he performs his part
> Who touches even Garrick to the heart."

Congreve makes Witwould say, "Contradictions beget one another, like rabbits." The simile may hold on this occasion in regard to epigrams. I have had two sent me on this subject, which I shall venture to repeat, though since they were sent to me (as was the last) they have made their appearance in some of our public papers:

> "When kingly Barry acts, the boxes ring
> With echoing praise: 'Ay, every inch a king!'
> When Garrick dwindling whines,
> Th' assenting house
> Re-whispers aptly back, 'A mouse! a mouse!'"

> "Shakespeare, arise, and end the warm dispute—
> Bid malice cease to sneer, and wits be mute.
> If both the Lears have merit in thy eyes,
> On both smile gracious, and divide the prize.
> Of future worth let candor be the test:
> Who *envies* most shall be but *second best.*"

Will it not be a matter of some surprise to the public that an actor of such improving talents and happy abilities as Mr. Barry is avowedly possessed of should be rejected by any manager of a theatre? Should any personal pique or prejudice prevent the director adding to the strength of his company or to the variety of the town's entertainment? Is any of our theatres so rich in actors as not to need any performer who has stood the trial and passed the public approbation? But perhaps the great vanity and little fears of the player got the better even of the avarice of the manager, and rather than

have so powerful a competitor (in tragedy especially) under the same roof, he chose to forego (heart-breaking thought!) even the lucre that must have accrued to the manager from such an actor's performance. Yet that this stage-director might have had this actor in his company is a truth the patentee can scarcely be hardy enough to deny while Mr. Barry is living to assert it. In my view of the two Lears I have rather chosen to dwell longer on the excellences of one actor than on a closer observation of the defects of the other; for, though, as the Duke of Buckingham observes,

> "'Tis great delight to laugh at some men's ways,
> Yet 'tis much greater to give merit praise."

V.

STRICTURES UPON THE ACTING AND PERSONAL TRAITS OF DAVID GARRICK.

THE opinions of the writer of the following article (published in the *Mirror of Taste*, Philadelphia, about 1811) were evidently formed on critical remarks upon the same subject published in the *London Monthly Mirror* of 1801. I submit them to the reader with no other comment but that they will be found to run on the same lines with what I have hitherto said regarding favorable and adverse criticism on the merits of the English Roscius:

That Mr. Garrick was the greatest actor of his time is so universally admitted that, if there were any one now disinclined to believe it, prudence would forbid him to avow his incredulity. Against the voice of nations and the opinions of most of the enlightened critics of his time it would be presumptuous, and no less vain than presumptuous, to set up a different opinion at this time; but that much of the extravagant eulogies we now read, and many of the strange stories we hear recounted of his powers, are the offspring of that

warm enthusiasm which sees everything in superlative excess may be reasonably believed, and indeed is more likely, and seems much more conformable to plain truth and common sense. We never find in real life such prodigies as those we read of; and it seems more probable that the judgment of his extreme admirers was blinded by wonder and betrayed into an exaggerated notion of his talents than that an individual should be so much more than human as Garrick must have been if some things recounted of him were true. It has been frequently related, and by many a person of good sense believed, that at one time, for the purpose of instructing a painter, he, merely by the force of imagination, went through the whole process of declension from ruddy health to actual death; that he first glowed with feverish heat, then grew languid, pale, and helpless; sank on a couch; his breath became hard and quick; a cadaverous ghastliness succeeded; his eyes rolled, their pupils were almost hidden, while the lids lay open; and he expired in a manner so natural as to startle the spectators. Now, though it is highly probable—I would say certain—that this story was a mere fabrication, yet the fact of its being thought of, and still more its being believed, is a satisfactory demonstration that the public mind respecting this extraordinary man was wound up to a pitch of rapturous enthusiasm, such almost as Johnson, in his metaphorical language, would have called a "calenture of the brain." I myself have many times heard it repeated by men of sense and credibility, and swallowed as if it were truth by the gaping listeners—nay, I remember the time when I should have thought him an infidel who doubted it. But experience has cooled my credulity, and as I have since had occasion to observe that spells little less potent have been raised by talents very inferior to some of Garrick's contemporaries of whom nothing of the kind was ever imagined, my mind is made up on the subject, and, though believing him to be the greatest actor of his day, I still think that much of what has been said of him is mere hyperbolical nonsense.

It is pretty evident that variety and comprehensiveness were the characteristics of Mr. Garrick's talents. He could on the

same night display great tragic and great comic powers—appall the heart with fear in Macbeth and shake the house with laughter in Sharp. But the generally-received opinion, that in all the intermediate parts between these extremes he was equally great, is unwarranted by fact. A fond and amiable friend, Sir Joshua Reynolds, has placed him in his celebrated picture as standing equally between Tragedy and Comedy, but there is more of fine poetical imagination than of truth in the worthy knight's opinion. A friend of Garrick's, of superior intellectual powers to Sir Joshua, thought that Mr. Garrick's tragedy scarcely bore any comparison with his comedy; in the former he had successful rivals, while in the latter it is probable he never had an equal in the world. A critic and poet now living, who carried his admiration of Garrick as near to enthusiasm as a fine and accurate discriminating judgment would allow, and who was personally partial to him, maintained the superiority of Barry in many parts. Mossop, who was at the time alluded to a perfect stranger in London, an adventurer little known, and who labored under the disadvantage (at that time no slight one) of being an Irishman, so successfully rivalled the English Roscius in some of his own characters that the latter ungenerously and unjustly conspired to remove him in order to be relieved from what he felt to be superiority. Henderson, too, wanting many natural requisites which Garrick enjoyed to perfection, though he died at an early age, held in many characters, comic as well as tragic, a very reputable rank of competition with him, in the opinions of the most judicious. His affectionate friend and preceptor, Dr. Johnson, derided not only the public opinion respecting him, but laughed at his own pretensions ("Punch cannot feel," said the doctor), and gravely declared that there was not a man in Drury Lane Theatre who could not pronounce the soliloquy of Hamlet, beginning "To be or not to be," as well. In his comedy, too, the doctor's discerning eye perceived faults where the public could see none; and he particularly censured him in the character of Archer for not letting the gentleman shine through the footman. His warmest panegyrist, the *Dramatic Censor*, in some sort agrees with

the doctor ("nor attains to what is called the fine gentleman"), but this he smooths over with the very unphilosophical reason that it was too languid for his great powers. In the character of Hamlet the late Mr. Sheridan (he whose son has eclipsed all moderns as a dramatic poet, and been surpassed by few as an orator and statesman) held a competition with Mr. Garrick which excited his jealousy; and indeed he in some characters so far outshone him as to render a total resignation of the characters advisable on the part of the latter; but those were chiefly declamatory characters, such as Cato, Brutus, etc.; in *King John* and the *Roman Father* he was allowed to take the lead.

Though the revolution which Mr. Garrick effected in the system of acting has brought the stage nearer to Nature than it was when he first appeared, it is the opinion of many luminous critics that he injured by it the art of reading poetry. Sir Brooke Boothby says that, "Willing to depreciate a talent which he did not possess, Garrick contrived to bring measured and harmonious recitation into disrepute." A critic of a later day, adverting to that opinion, says that "With all his skill, and the wonderful effects ascribed to that gentleman's acting, he was by constitution or a natural deficiency of voice unable to acquire reputation as a declaimer." And here again we find the opinions of his idolatrous panegyrist, the *Dramatic Censor*, come in confirmation of those remarks. "Though generally correct in modulation," says that critic, "and almost invariably so in expressing the sense of his author, there is a respirative drag, as if to catch the breath;" and further on: "Our English Roscius I never could admire in declamation; indeed, he has kept pretty clear of it."

The innovation of Mr. Garrick, however, was certainly a happy one for the drama; but it must be understood as not at all reflecting upon his gigantic predecessor, Betterton. For the fact is, that elocution had, from the time of the latter, been on the decline, and when Garrick appeared had begun to assume a pompousness or unnatural sort of strut adapted rather to the termination of the lines than to the sense and spirit of

the subject or the joint harmony of the thoughts and numbers.*

This afforded a broad mark for a man of genius to aim at, and yielded an easy victory to such popular talents as those of Garrick—the more easy because his talents as a wit and a poet supplied him with weapons which he did not fail to employ, and which enabled him to accomplish his triumph over the exploded system by overcharged caricature and ludicrous imitation. Besides this, he stands accused—and that by no mean judges, either—of having bounded from that which he threw into contempt to an opposite extreme, and given his principal attention to manner and gesture; for, as a respectable writer says, "In his gravest and most tragical parts he had recourse to trick, in consequence of which those actors who merely copied him were execrable."

Nevertheless, he was certainly a wonderful actor. He had an admirable stage-face, with an eye quick, piercing, and almost miraculously expressive. He had uncommon spirit, vast discernment, and that admirable requisite, a mind formed by Nature for discriminating characters, with physical organs little less powerful in exhibiting, in all their symptoms and phenomena, the lively, ardent, and impetuous passions; looks and gestures which were often more impressive and intelligible than the words of his author; and tones of voice which thrilled to the inmost recesses of the heart and forced the stoutest nerves to vibrate in unison with them. It was by these instruments that he was able to wind up the public feelings to his will, and make the world believe, contrary to fact and truth, that he was as great in tragedy as in comedy, and therefore that he was more universal than he really was.

The fame of Mr. Garrick as an actor was not, like those of most other performers, borne up by his professional talents alone; he had other advantages, of which he made the best use possible in swelling the amount of his reputation.

* The stage in England and America is sadly degenerated again in this way, particularly among the females. This is a deformity to which the greatest industry and attention should be opposed, because it seems to be a natural tendency.

His wit, his humor, and mimicry, his happy talent for small versification, and the great powers he possessed of rendering himself agreeable as a companion, extended his acquaintance to an immense circle. Prudence, of which he possessed a larger share than is often found united with genius, directed him to select his companions from the highest order he could reach at, and those he justly considered not only as the safest, but as the most likely to promote the interest of any man they admit to their intimacy, and at the same time the least wasteful to the purse. From among the opulent, the learned, and the powerful he chose his associates, and those he cultivated with all the address of which he was master, carrying on a large traffic of flattery, of which he was no niggard either to them or to himself: as Goldsmith says, he was "be-Rosciused, and they were be-praised." He puffed them up with adulation, dexterously administered to each through the medium of the others. They pledged themselves that he was the most extraordinary man in the world, and thought themselves bound to redeem their pledge; and thus was he so effectually ensured against all competition that an actor of equal talents would have had no chance of success in a struggle with him.

That he really believed himself to be so very superior as his panegyrists described and his admirers thought him—and his panegyrists and admirers were almost a whole nation—may well be doubted, as envy of the most painful kind and jealousy amounting to panic continually harassed him. He never failed to betray emotions of discontent whenever the conversation turned upon the merits of great performers; and this unhappy feeling so tyrannically overruled reason, candor, and liberality in his heart that he became jealous of those who could not be his rivals, and actually sickened at the praises of eminent actresses. Mrs. Pritchard's fame greatly embittered his life. Dr. Beattie, speaking of Mrs. Siddons in a letter to Sir William Forbes, says: "I asked Tom Davies (the author of Garrick's *Life*) whether he could account for Garrick's neglect, or rather discouragement, of her. He imputed it to jealousy. 'How is it possible,' said I, 'that Garrick could be jealous of a woman?'—'He would have been jealous of a

child,' answered he, 'if that child had been a favorite of the public; to my certain knowledge he would.'" Yet the doctor was a great admirer of Garrick, as appears from several passages in his letters; he says that that great actor had once, in playing Macbeth, nearly made him throw himself over the front of the two-shilling gallery. And in another letter he says: "I thought my old friend Garrick fell little or nothing short of theatrical perfection, and I have seen him in his prime and in his highest characters; but Garrick never affected me half so much as Mrs. Siddons has done." Had Garrick lived to hear this from such a person as Dr. Beattie it would have killed him; but the doctor had in him as large a share of prudent suavity as Mr. Garrick himself, and would not probably have hurt the feelings of Roscius by the avowal of such an opinion if he were alive.

From Garrick's excessive and irrational jealousy arose a number of foibles, and, I am sorry to say it, one vice worse than all. It rendered him sometimes unjust to the merit of others, and sometimes betrayed him into little acts of duplicity. His conduct to Mr. Mossop is one of the many instances which appear in the history of the stage to establish this charge against him. Tate Wilkinson, who has indulged as freely as any one in jesting upon the singularities of that excellent actor, Mossop, speaking of his leaving Drury Lane, says: "It was occasioned by an affront he took from Mr. Garrick's appointing him to act Richard, as we will suppose, this night, and his first and best character,* which stood well against Mr. Garrick's, though not so artfully discriminated, while at the same time the manager (Garrick) had secured a command from the Prince of Wales for the night following; so that when Mossop had finished his Richard with remarkable credit, to his astonishment the Mr. Palmer of that age stepped forward and said, 'To-morrow night, by command of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales (George the Third, then a youth), *King Richard the Third*—King Richard by Mr. Garrick'—it gave a great damp to what Mr. Mossop had just done. It was certainly galling, and proved duplicity and ill-

* No; not by many—not by a great deal!

nature as well as envy." Nothing that can be advanced on this transaction could convey a more adequate idea of Mr. Garrick's motives than the simple recital of the transaction itself. It was decisive as to the fate of Mossop, who was too proud to remain any longer at Drury Lane, and too dignified to complain of the insult to any one but Mr. Garrick himself. In disgust, therefore, he left him for ever, and, engaging with Barry and Woodward at Crow Street, Dublin, incurred that series of losses and woes which at last brought him to the grave.

Though Mr. Sheridan was a much less formidable rival than Mossop, Mr. Garrick was tortured with jealousy of him too; and his feelings were raised to an unreasonable degree of painfulness at Sheridan's success in *King John*, especially when he was told that the king was uncommonly pleased with that actor's representation of the part. "To make the draught still more unpalatable," says the recorder of these facts, "upon his (Garrick's) asking whether His Majesty approved his playing the Bastard, he was told, without the least compliment paid to his acting, it was imagined that the king thought that the character was rather too bold in the drawing and that the coloring was overcharged and glaring. Mr. Garrick, who had been so accustomed to applause, and who, of all men living, most sensibly felt the neglect of it, was greatly struck with a preference given to another, and which left him out of all consideration; and, though the boxes were taken for *King John* several nights successively, he would never after permit the play to be acted."

These are proofs of a most unpardonable invidiousness of nature. They are absolute—not in the least doubtful or capable of palliation, for of Mossop or Sheridan he was not called upon to give an opinion: the stamp of public opinion had been long impressed upon them. But in the case of Henderson a pretext may be set up that his opposition to that admirable actor was an error of judgment. Yet his many endeavors to depreciate and his perseverance in undervaluing Henderson after the talents of the latter had gone through the mint, assayed to high value, show that our hero was gov-

erned, in that case at least, by the same envious spirit which moved him in the cases of Sheridan and Mossop. After Henderson had at Bath obtained the name of "The Bath Roscius," and at Dublin was placed in the same rank with their favored Mossops, Sheridans, and Barrys, and, what was much more, after he had received the most unequivocal approbation from no less a man than Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Mr. Garrick being prevailed upon to go to the Haymarket to see him play Shylock, in which he excelled, and being asked by the friend who brought him, "Well, Mr. Garrick, speak candidly; did not Shylock please you?"—"Oh yes, oh yes," replied Garrick, "and so did Tubal."

Without meaning anything like offence to the profession, we are firmly persuaded that there are many good actors who are far from being competent judges of the merits of others. We have been accustomed from infancy to hear it remarked, and long observation has confirmed us in the opinion. We think it not difficult to account for it, either. Old Charles Macklin, who never saw real merit that he did not endeavor to bring it forward—of which there are many living examples—and the venerable Mr. Hull of Covent Garden Theatre, were excellent judges, and no doubt others are to be found; but we speak generally. Even old Sheridan, who, so far from having any of Garrick's envy, always erred on the other side, and who was a gentleman of most uncommon powers of mind and refined taste, was deficient in judgment upon the talents of players; of which we cannot give a stronger proof than what Dr. Beattie relates of him. In a letter to Sir William Forbes the doctor says that "Sheridan assured him that in every comic character, from Lady Townly to Nell, Mrs. Siddons was as great and as original as in tragedy;" which was downright rhodomontade. In reviewing the history of the stage we find Mr. Garrick, with a perversion of judgment truly astonishing, the opposer of candidates of talent and the promoter of men of incapacity. He discouraged the after-celebrated Tom King, and kept him in the shade till Mr. Sheridan took him to Dublin, where he first received the just reward of his rare powers. He refused Miss Brent, though

urged by Dr. Arne to secure her to his theatre, and he entirely overlooked Miss Younge for two seasons, during which she played inferior parts under him at Drury Lane Theatre. That this was owing to mere defect of judgment, not jealousy, appears from his subsequent conduct; for as soon as he heard that she succeeded in Dublin he actually despatched Moody the player after her to offer her a *carte blanche;* in consequence of which she played the first characters at Drury Lane for eight years, and would have continued to do so longer if Mr. Harris had not bought her off by terms which Mr. Garrick would not agree to. To the repeated offers of the celebrated John Palmer, and after various probationary rehearsals, he gave a positive refusal, still assuring him that "he never would do;" and he uniformly undervalued the imperial mistress of the stage, Mrs. Siddons; while, on the other hand, he admired more than any one Tate Wilkinson, one of the worst actors in the world. And why? Why, truly, because he was a mimic. These are all facts, to find which we can direct any reader to the books and pages where they are recorded; and we think it is not going too far to conclude from these instances of his want of judgment or of candor in the case of persons of conspicuity that numbers who might have been ornaments to the stage were pushed off from it in the course of his long theatrical reign, and were left to languish away life unknown, perhaps in obscurity and want.

Lively as was his genius and irritable as were his feelings, his conduct was still kept under the steady, unrelaxed rein of worldly prudence and discretion. Like most other actors, he frequently mistook the bent of his talents, and often found that his inclinations and his professional powers were at variance. Very different from them, however, he never persisted in putting his conceits into practice, but as soon as he found that the public differed from his expectation in his performance of a character he wisely abandoned the attempt. Falstaff, Shylock, the Bastard in *King John*, King John himself, Marplot, and a long et cætera, he attempted because he liked them, and left them because the public did not; for it is a mistaken idea, universally though it prevailed, that he could

play everything better than all other actors. His superiority consisted really in this, that he was unrivalled in a greater number and greater variety of characters than any other performer. To say that in wit he was inferior to Foote is to say no more of him than may be asserted of any of the most brilliant of their contemporaries. That Garrick had occasionally sallies of true wit is unquestionable, but they were only occasional, not frequent; nor were they, as Foote's were, continually and instantly at his command. I have often heard the question discussed whether Garrick's claim to the title of a wit was perfectly clear. He had, however, in abundance that which often passes current for wit—a vigorous and lively imagination, aided by a considerable share of knowledge of books and much knowledge of mankind, together with a keen perception of the ludicrous. Along with these he had extraordinary talents for mimicry, and an excellent memory, which, from a large store of experience and observation, furnished him with boundless materials for conversation, of which he generally made the most, expatiating upon them in a very fascinating manner; but from his dilatations, if they were presented in writing and not witnessed personally, any man who knew him could tell what the sort of company was in which he uttered them. In the presence of superiors in rank and condition his fancy seemed to be lowered down to a reverential decorum, and in the presence of Foote his wit was subdued, as it is said Antony's spirit was by Cæsar. It was not in the pleasant warfare of wit, nor in the quick reply or retort, nor in the vivid reciprocation of dialogue, he shone, but in the happy relation of humorous stories and pleasant anecdotes. In these he had a peculiar felicity, and was almost unrivalled. The superiority of Barry in the telling of an Irish story, however—but in none other—he acknowledged. Yet with all these gifts there is reason to believe that Goldsmith's character of him in the little poem of "Retaliation" was perfectly correct. With his opinion,

"It is only that when he is off he is acting,"

Lord Oxford's (Walpole) exactly corresponded. "I dined

to-day at Garrick's," says his lordship. "There were the Duke of Grafton, Lady Rochfort, Lady Holderness, the crooked Moyston, and Dabren, the Spanish minister; two regents, of which one is Lord Chamberlain and the other Groom of the Stole; and the wife of a Secretary of State. This is being *sur un assez bon ton* for a player! Don't you want to ask me how I like him? Do want, and I will tell you. I like *her* exceedingly; she is all sense, and all sweetness too. I don't know how, but *he* does not improve so fast upon me. There is a great deal of parts, vivacity, and variety, but there is a great deal, too, of mimicry and burlesque. I am very ungrateful, for he flatters me abundantly, but, unluckily, I know it. I was accustomed to it enough when my father was First Minister; on his fall I lost it all at once." "Garrick," says another elegant writer, "was all submission in the presence of a peer or a poet, equally loath to offend the dignity of the one or provoke the irritability of the other; hence he was at all times too methodical in his conversation to admit of his mixing in the feast of reason and the flow of soul. To his dependants and inferior players, however, he was indeed King David, except when he had a mind to mortify them by means of one another. On such occasions he generally took some of the lowest among them, whom he not only cast in the same scenes with himself, but frequently walked arm-and-arm with them in the greenroom, and sometimes in his morning ramble about the streets."

By all his imitators his ordinary deportment and speech in private life have been described as very singular. We have heard him mimicked by Henderson, whose imitation was said to be frightfully perfect; by Brush Collins; by Tate Wilkinson; by a celebrated public mimic in London whose name we now forget. Their imitations all partook, no doubt, of the exaggeration inseparable from mimicry, but they all so exactly resembled each other that it was impossible to resist the persuasion that they were all good caricature pictures of the same person. Henderson's was comparatively chaste, and was said by some of Garrick's intimates to be very little overcharged. Taking this for granted, I conceive Wilkinson's

account of Garrick's conversation to come as near to the thing as it was possible for writing to bring it. Of this a single specimen will answer as well as a thousand. It seems that, owing to the departure of Mossop, Garrick was at a loss for a Bajazet, and, perhaps to mortify Mossop, he selected Wilkinson to perform that great character. A private rehearsal of the part was ordered in Mr. Garrick's dressing-room and in his presence, for the benefit of his corrections. Mr. Cross, the prompter, was ordered to attend with the play, and also Mr. Holland, who was to perform Tamerlane. Mr. Garrick was in high humor, and Wilkinson, who says so, details the conversation thus: "'Well, now, Cross, hey! Why, now, this will be too much for my exotic! Hey, Cross? I must do it myself; what say you? Hey, now, Cross?'—Cross replied, 'I am afraid not this year, sir, as the time is drawing near, and Bajazet is long, and the play must be done next Monday.' —'Well, now, hey, Cross! Why, that is true, but don't you think my brow and eye in Bajazet? How do you think I should play it?'—'Oh, sir,' said Cross, 'like everything else you do, your Bajazet would be incomparable.' To which we all bowed and assented. He then acted a speech or two in the first scene, and his look was truly inimitable."

From the life of Mr. Garrick some most useful lessons of prudential and moral conduct may be deduced. One of these —and perhaps the most valuable, because it concerns our duty toward our neighbor—is to be cautious how we form opinions upon the characters of our fellow-creatures on the illusory grounds of public report; for it is not more impossible for a thing to be at once black and white, light and dark, good and bad, than for David Garrick to be such as he has been described. It may serve to check any overweening fondness for public opinion, inspired by pride and vanity, to see how inefficacious to the obtaining of unsullied reputation, or even fair play, are the most strenuous efforts of the finest talents. To us it seems impossible to find two men more different than the Garrick of his admirers and the Garrick of his adversaries.

As specimens of the pro and con. on this subject the reader

will peruse, no doubt with surprise, the following characters. The following is taken from the *European Magazine:*

"He was too cunning and too selfish to be loved or respected, and so immoderately fond of money and praise that he expected you should cram him with flattery. He was a kind of spoiled child whom you must humor in all his ways and follies. He was often in extremes of civility and sly impertinence, provoking and timid by turns. If he handed you a teacup or a glass, you must take it as a great condescension; and he often called to you in the street to tell you in a loud voice and at some distance that he intended you the honor of a visit. This some wag termed 'a visit in perspective.' He was sore and waspish to a degree of folly, and had creatures about him who were stationed spies, and gave him intelligence of every idle word that was said of him; at the same time they misrepresented or exaggerated what passed, in order to gratify him. He was very entertaining, and could tell a story with great humor; but he was generally posting to his interest, and so taken up with his own concerns that he seldom was a pleasant companion. He was stiff and strained, and more an actor in company than on the stage, as Goldsmith has described him. In short, he was an unhappy man with all his success and fame, and wore himself out in fretting and solicitude about his worldly affairs and in theatrical squabbles and altercations. Though he loved money, he has been friendly on some occasions, and liberal to persons in distress; but he had the knack of making his acquaintance useful and subservient to him, and always had his interest in view. His levees put you in mind of a court, where you might see mean adulation, insincerity, pride, and vanity, and the little man in ecstasy at hearing himself applauded by a set of toad-eaters and hungry poets."

"As an author he was not without merit, having written some smart epigrams, prologues, epilogues, and farces; and, to do him justice, he was not very vain of his writings.

"To conclude of him as an actor,

> 'Take him for all in all,
> I ne'er shall see his like again.'

"As a man he had failings, for which we must make allowance when we consider that he was intoxicated, and even corrupted, by the great incense and court paid to him by his admirers."

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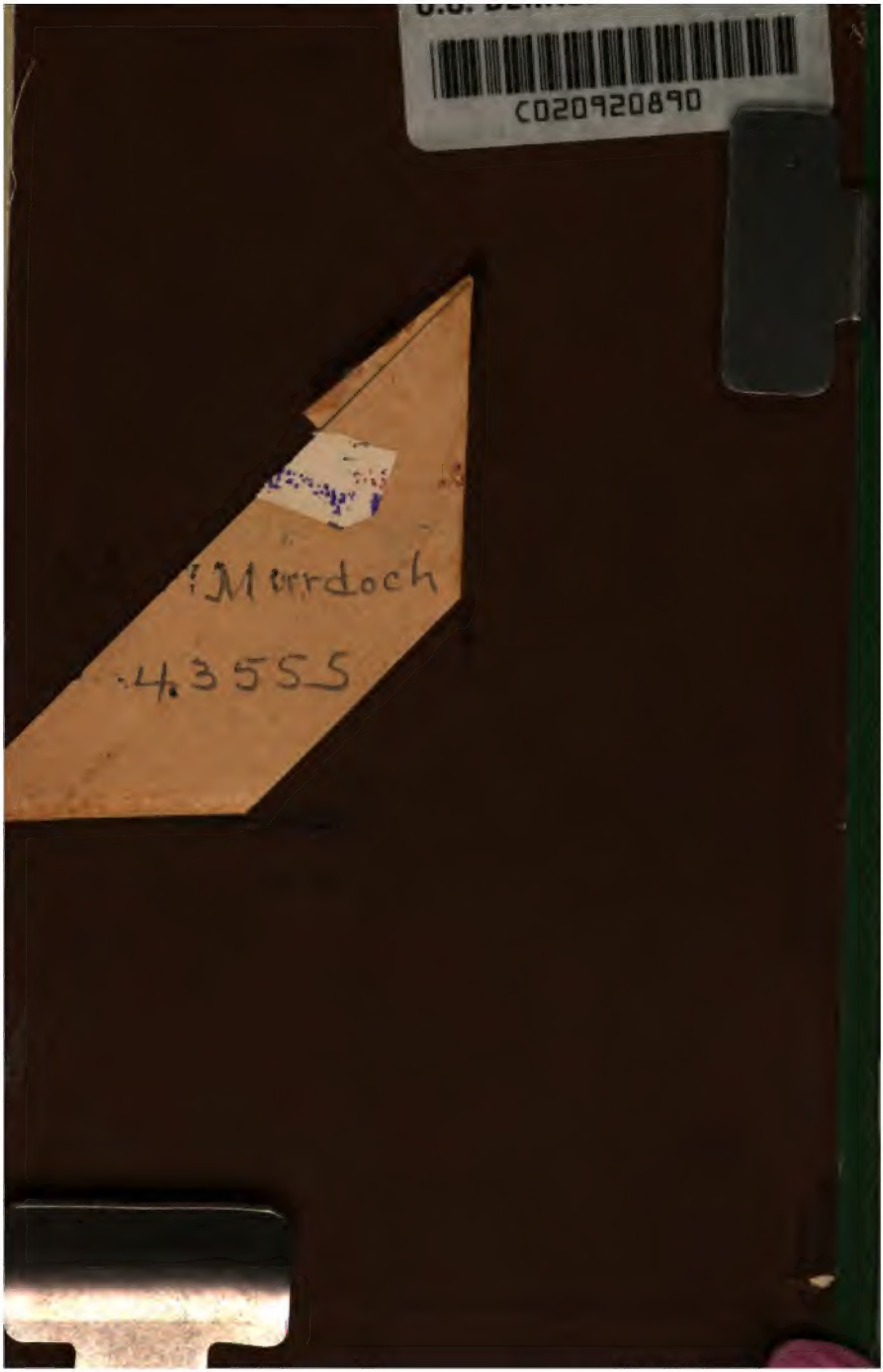
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